

*YONGHEGONG: IMPERIAL UNIVERSALISM AND THE ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF
BEIJING'S "LAMA TEMPLE"*

By

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Abstract

Yonghegong 雍和宮 (“Palace of Harmony and Peace”), popularly known in English as the “Lama Temple,” is often described as Beijing’s largest and most important Tibetan Buddhist monastery, but from its establishment in 1694 during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) to the present, Yonghegong has continued to evolve physically and functionally, from imperial prince’s residence, to “travelling palace” (*xinggong* 行宮), to imperial ancestral shrine and Tibetan Buddhist monastic college, and finally to its current role as monastery, monastic college and museum. Despite its history and ubiquity as a Beijing landmark and destination for pilgrims and tourists, it has received limited academic attention. Furthermore, previous studies have emphasized the site as a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, downplaying its political significance. This study will provide a more comprehensive interpretation of Yonghegong as an expression of the Qing ideology of imperial universalism, focusing on the site during the reign of its major patron, the Qianlong emperor (r. 1735-1796).

In order both to describe and interpret the multidimensional complexities of Yonghegong in a systematic fashion, I will employ as a heuristic device an interpretive model for the site inspired by two aspects the Indo-Tibetan tradition of the mandala: symbolic mapping and spatial ordering. The many symbols at the site will be arranged according to what I call the “three spheres” that center on the person of the Qianlong emperor: microcosm, the somatic sphere (symbols of the emperor’s presence and personal history at the site); mesocosm, the socio-political sphere (multicultural symbols of the emperor’s legitimacy); and finally macrocosm, the eschatological sphere (symbols of the emperor’s role as enlightened ruler, ushering in the coming of the next buddha, Maitreya). Interpretation of the three spheres at Yonghegong is then applied

first to the site's external features (e.g. site plan, architecture, what I call the "outer mandala") and then to examples of the internal features (e.g. sculptures, inscriptions, what I call the "inner mandala"). This study will both contextualize much of the overlooked symbolism of the Qianlong-era art and architecture at Yonghegong, as well as provide the first comprehensive interpretation of the site as a whole.

Acknowledgements

My first visit to Yonghegong was during the summer of 1990. The site was sprawling, confusing and rather empty of visitors. The *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva*, often the most memorable sight for visitors, was not even open to the public since it was undergoing re-gilding. My only clear memory is of the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, its head illuminated by diagonal shafts of light from the central skylight, piercing the dusty air in the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. I was not to encounter Yonghegong again until almost a decade later, when research for my master's thesis brought me to a worn copy of Ferdinand Lessing's *Yung-ho-kung*, the first, and until now the only, major work on the site in English. I was intrigued that so little work had been done on the site. The heavens opened, angels sang. "What an opportunity!" I thought. It has now become clear that the angels were warning me, but fools rush in... Despite the length of this project and its many challenges, it has been an extremely rewarding experience, and it was made possible by many people who contributed in many ways.

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書道之難，難於上青天

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Chapter One: Introduction

Yonghegong 雍和宮 (“Palace of Harmony and Peace”), popularly known in English as the “Lama Temple,” is often described as Beijing’s¹ largest and most important Tibetan Buddhist monastery, but over its long history this multifaceted and complex site has been much more. From 1694 to the present Yonghegong has continued to evolve physically and functionally, from imperial prince’s residence, to “travelling palace” (*xingong* 行宮),² to ancestral shrine and Tibetan Buddhist monastic college, and finally to its current role as monastery, monastic college and museum. It is a vast compound with gilded halls, tree-lined courtyards, and works of art ranging from the sumptuous and delicate to the colossal and awe-inspiring. Packed with visitors and pilgrims on a daily basis, the site today is not only an important part of the religious life of contemporary Beijing residents and a tribute to the rich historical and artistic legacy of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), but is also held up as a symbol of the harmonious multiethnic character of the People’s Republic of China.

Concurrent with the functional evolution of Yonghegong, layer upon layer of symbolic meaning has accrued to the site, expressed in a kind of agglutinative iconography found in the art,

¹ For consistency I will use Beijing throughout to refer to the capital city of the Qing dynasty and the modern Chinese state, despite the anachronism. “Beijing” has only been officially in use since 1949, the city during the Ming and Qing periods most often known simply as “our capital” (*Jingshi* 京師). For a discussion of the issue, see Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), xxxiii-iv. Unless otherwise stated, translations of Beijing site names will follow Naquin, *Peking*.

² Chinese names and terms will be provided with pinyin Romanization followed by the term in traditional characters. Where appropriate, such as in names of modern persons from the PRC, simplified characters will be given. Manchu, in the Möllendorff transliteration system, will be indicated by “Ma.” For Tibetan, Sanskrit and Mongol, although I do not read them, I have endeavored to be consistent in my use of Romanization of names and terms. For Tibetan, I have tried to follow the THL Simplified Phonetic system in the text generally, with the Wylie Romanization of the written forms provided with the first use and indicated with a “T.” Sanskrit will be used throughout for common Buddhist names and terms, identified by “S.” where appropriate. Sanskrit terms that have entered the English lexicon, such as “mandala”, will be used without diacritics. For Mongolian, indicated with “Mo.”, I have tried to follow the Atwood system, with the exception of the familiar term “khan.” When needed for clarity, Chinese will be indicated by a “C.”

architecture and inscriptions, an iconography that goes far beyond exclusively Tibetan Buddhist interpretations. Although the Tibetan Buddhism practiced at the site is certainly the most overt aspect and has been the focus of both academic and popular studies of the site, two broader dimensions of Yonghegong will be explored in depth in this study. First is the personal association of the site with two Qing rulers, the Yongzheng (r. 1722-35) and Qianlong (r. 1735-1796) emperors, who called Yonghegong home and left traces of their presence there. For the Qianlong emperor in particular, references in calligraphic inscriptions and other forms throughout Yonghegong highlight the status of the site as his birthplace, his home as a youth, a shrine to his father, and a site of his own religious practice. Second is the recurring theme of what I will refer to as the ideology of “imperial universalism,” and various expressions of that ideology at Yonghegong are as important as Tibetan Buddhist iconography to the overall symbolic program of the site. One dimension of this is the multicultural character of the site.³ Beyond its status as a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, the imperial patrons of the site were Manchus, the majority of the monks and lamas there have always been Mongols, the architecture is predominantly Chinese, and until the last century two large sections of the site included a Chinese scholar’s garden and a temple to Guandi, the Chinese God of War.⁴ However, as we will see, Guandi and a number of other deities that make up the pantheon at Yonghegong can be shown to have multicultural significance.

³ Although ‘multiculturalism’ is a somewhat loaded term, I am using multicultural simply to refer to the use of symbols at Yonghegong derived from many cultures within the Qing Empire, where such symbolism is a statement of imperial universalism, and not cultural pluralism. For more on the issue see Beatrice S. Bartlett, “Review of *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* by Evelyn S. Rawski,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 61, no. 1 (Jun., 2001): 171-183. For a critical overview of the issues surrounding the contemporary use of ‘multiculturalism’ as cultural pluralism in both China and the U.S., see Wen Jin, *Pluralist Universalism: An Asian Americanist Critique of U.S. and Chinese Multiculturalisms* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012).

⁴ In current PRC usage, the ethnonym “Han 漢/汉” is preferred when referring to the majority population, with “Chinese” reserved for the nation as a whole. However for this study I will retain the more familiar English usage of Chinese for Han.

Certainly the multicultural elements of Yonghegong can be linked to the considerable political importance of the site, and a political interpretation of Qing multiculturalism, and particularly of Qing support for Tibetan Buddhism, has long held sway, i.e. that the Qing used the various languages and symbolic systems of the various cultures and peoples of the empire as tools of rule.⁵ However, just as Yonghegong was not exclusively Tibetan Buddhist, Qing multiculturalism, for the Qianlong emperor at least, may not have been exclusively political, particularly with regard to Tibetan Buddhism.

Other layers of significance to the Qing court's support of Tibetan Buddhism have been highlighted by scholars of the "New Qing Studies," who assert that a purely realpolitik interpretation oversimplifies the Qing court's relationship to Tibetan Buddhism, particularly during the long reign of the Qianlong emperor, the major patron of Yonghegong.⁶ Although it is probably impossible to discuss an emperor's personal feelings or religious beliefs divorced from their political significance, this study will offer a more nuanced understanding of the symbolic program at Yonghegong based on references to the physical presence and personal religious practice of the Qianlong emperor found in various forms throughout the site by 1792, the date of the last major structural addition to the site.

Yonghegong is certainly complex enough strictly as a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, a fact that may explain in part the relative paucity of studies on this important subject. By expanding the symbolic dimensions of the site I run the risk of creating an unwieldy amalgamation of interpretive challenges. However, in order both to describe and interpret the multidimensional

⁵ Marina Illich provides an excellent overview of the history of the realpolitik interpretation and of studies such as her own that suggest a deeper significance of Tibetan Buddhist ideas at the Qing court. Marina Illich, "Selections from the life of a Tibetan Buddhist polymath: Chankya Rolpai Dorje (Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje), 1717-1786" (Ph. D. thesis, Columbia University, 2006), 160-164, 166-173, (UMI 3203753).

⁶ For an overview of the New Qing Studies, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, "The New Qing History," *Radical History Review* 88 (Winter 2004): 193-206. For a critique of the New Qing Studies approach to the question of the status of Tibet in the Qing Empire, see Illich, "Selections," 43-159.

complexities of the architecture, sculpture, and inscriptions at Yonghegong in a systematic fashion, I will employ an interpretive model for the site as a whole inspired by the Indo-Tibetan tradition of the mandala (S. *maṇḍala*; T. *dkyil-'khor*; C. *mantuluo* 曼荼羅). Although I am somewhat hesitant to use the term because it is so broadly applied in both academia and popular culture, as well as in its original Indo-Tibetan context, my model will adapt two very specific aspects of the typical mandala: spatial ordering and symbolic mapping.

From the first aspect, I have derived a way of organizing the site itself with what I will call the ‘outer’ and ‘inner’ mandalas: *outer* relating to the site plan, architecture and other structures at Yonghegong; and *inner* relating to the calligraphic inscriptions and sculptural pantheon of Buddhist deities enshrined in the hall interiors. The second aspect inspires what I will call the ‘three spheres’: a way of organizing the symbols at the site into three groups, visualized as a series of concentric spheres centered on the person of the Qianlong emperor. The first sphere, or *microcosm*, will refer to references to the emperor’s physical presence at the site; the second, or *mesocosm*, will refer to symbols of the emperor’s political legitimacy among various constituencies of the Qing Empire; and finally the third sphere, or *macrocosm*, will refer to religious dimensions of the emperor’s role. Although the mandala was a part of the intellectual milieu of the Qing court of the eighteenth-century, I am not attempting to demonstrate that the Qianlong emperor or his contemporaries thought of Yonghegong in these specific terms. I am using the mandala as a heuristic device, providing a framework that can be used to articulate a more complete, systematic and nuanced interpretation of Yonghegong than has been attempted previously.

Overview of Chapters

This study will begin in this introduction with an overview of Yonghegong and its phases of development, followed by a survey of previous scholarship on the site, highlighting how earlier scholars have approached its complexities. Chapters Two and Three will present my response to the challenge of Yonghegong with a description of my interpretive model, detailing the inner/outer mandalas and the three spheres. Chapters Four, Five and Six will then proceed through the outer mandala, describing and interpreting the site plan, architecture and other relevant structures in relation to the three spheres.

Turning to the inner mandala, Chapter Seven introduces a number of topics that had broad influence on the production of Tibetan Buddhist art for the Qing court. I will draw attention to three cases that demonstrate how the ideology of imperial universalism can inform our understanding of Qing Tibetan Buddhist sculpture in areas beyond style or iconography. The first is the case of a text that proscribes the proper proportional measurements for Buddhist art, the *Canon of Iconometry* (*Zaoxiang liangdu jing* 造像量度經, 1742), a text with somewhat surprising political implications.⁷ The second case is that of the production of Buddhist sculptures for Yonghegong by a trio of specialist artisans from Nepal whose origins may have associated them with imperial legitimating efforts among the Qing Mongols. Finally, the third case is the development of a number of state-approved Tibetan Buddhist pantheons, and how their development can be tied to imperial universalism.

Finally, Chapter Eight focuses on the inner mandala at Yonghegong itself, but due to the sheer volume of Tibetan Buddhist art at Yonghegong, the immensity of the pantheon on display in paintings, textiles and sculpture, and the lack of information on the specific dating of most of

⁷ *Zaoxiang liangdu jing* 造像量度經 (“Canon of Iconometry”), T. v. 21, no. 1419, 936a-956b, SAT Daizōkyō Text Database, <http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index_en.html> (accessed November, 2009).

these works, my coverage of the inner mandala must be selective.⁸ I will limit my discussion to the sculptures of the halls making up the central axis of the site because they have been more consistently documented than the paintings and textiles, and they seem to have remained in place since the late eighteenth century.⁹ Furthermore, it is in the axial images that the interplay art, politics and religion at Yonghegong, the subject of this study, is most pronounced. Therefore, although I will describe the entire iconographic program of the inner mandala in a brief overview, I will focus on the major sculptures in the axial halls for more detailed study.

The Setting: General Context of the Site

Let me begin with a brief overview of the site's physical context, both in the former Qing capital and in contemporary Beijing, and the general site plan as it was during the Yonghegong's

⁸ Although I feel that both the outer and inner mandalas were “complete” as expressions of imperial universalism by 1792 (the date the last major structure was added to the site), a comprehensive discussion of the very extensive sculptural pantheon at Yonghegong might detract from the larger theme of this study. Furthermore, except for some of the axial sculptures, little information has yet been published on the specific dating of the many statues found at the site, and until such further basic research is done it will be impossible to discuss the entire pantheon there from a developmental perspective or in relation to other more firmly dated pantheons discussed in Chapter 6. In the two most important comprehensive studies of the site, both authors imply that the majority of the sculptures was almost certainly added to the collection by the end of the Qianlong period. In *Yonghegong zhilue* 雍和宮志略, Jin Liang lists five groups of statues at Yonghegong based on their origins. The first group included Buddhist statues already in the palace collection and sent to Yonghegong, made up of Esoteric Buddhist works from India and elsewhere that were added to the imperial collection from the Tang to the Ming dynasties. The second group included tribute gifts to the court from Mongolia, Tibet and Kham (*Kang* 康, today divided between Sichuan Province and the TAR). The third group was made up of statues sent as gifts to thank the Qianlong emperor for intervening in political crises in Tibet. The fourth group includes works made by the Qing court, although Jin does not distinguish them by reign. Finally, the fifth group included donations made to the monastery after the fall of the Qing in 1911. Jin Liang 金梁, *Yonghegong zhilue* 雍和宮志略 (“Yonghegong records summary”) (Beijing: Zhongguo Zangxue chubanshe, [1953] 1994), 199-200. In the 2001 text *Yonghegong* 雍和宮, it is asserted that the majority of the statues are from the eighteenth century. Niu Song 牛頌, ed., *Yonghegong* 雍和宮 (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu sheying yishu chubanshe, 2001), 126. Despite some ambiguity in these sources, I think it is safe to assume that, based on the works already in the court collection, the sheer productivity of the Qianlong court, and the dated gifts from the Dalai and Panchen lamas, the Yonghegong sculptural pantheon was both quite large and included all of the major deity types by the end of the Qianlong period, making the inner mandala “complete” at roughly the same time as the outer mandala.

⁹ Proof of this difficulty came during my site visit in 2005. I compared Ferdinand Lessing's careful listing and describing of the Esoteric Hall thangkas and their placement in the early twentieth century with those on display in the hall in 2005. Few if any 2005 thangkas matched their location in the 1930s. Ferdinand Lessing and Gösta Montell, *Yung-ho-kung, an Iconography of the Lamaist Cathedral in Peking, with Notes on Lamaist Mythology and Cult, Volume One* (Stockholm, 1942), 63-138.

eighteenth-century heyday. Yonghegong is located in the northeast corner of central Beijing in the Dongcheng district 東城區 (Fig. 1), just inside one of the city's most important modern thoroughfares, the Second Ring Road. From the elevated section of the Second Ring Road just north of Yonghegong, the brightly decorated roofs of the rear buildings of the site are clearly visible as one passes by. By day, the golden-orange roof tiles of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness stand out against the drab concrete of the nearby buildings, a contrast that is even more pronounced at night when the structure is illuminated. Aside from being a major traffic artery, the Second Ring Road also marks the underground route of the busy "Loop Line" (Line 2) of the Beijing subway, and a major transfer station from the Loop Line to other lines exists directly beneath Yonghegong. The Second Ring Road also has an important historic and symbolic significance: its long circumference marks the location of the massive city walls that it replaced in the mid-twentieth century, walls that in the Qing period defined the elite, restricted section of the capital that was known as the Inner City (*Neicheng* 內城), today known as Central Beijing.

The Dongcheng district of Central Beijing that includes Yonghegong is an area particularly rich in major Qing imperial sites, most notably the Forbidden City and Beihai Park. In the immediate vicinity of Yonghegong are such historically important sites as the Altar to Earth (*Ditan* 地壇), just north of Yonghegong and outside of the city wall during the Qing period; the Temple to Confucius (*Kongmiao* 孔廟) and the Directorate of Education, or Imperial College (*Guozijian* 國子監), directly across the street to the west of Yonghegong; and the Cypress Grove Monastery (*Bailinsi* 柏林寺), immediately to the east of Yonghegong.

Major roads in the Inner City extended out from the nine major gates in the surrounding city walls: three gates in the south wall and two each in the other three walls. Yonghegong is

located on what was one of these major thoroughfares, the road extending north from the Chongwen Gate (*Chongwenmen* 崇文門, “Gate of Exalted Literature”) in the south wall of the Inner City. Today, the name of this road varies from south to north, but the northernmost section of the road is called “Yonghegong Avenue” (*Yonghegong Dajie* 雍和宮大街) after Yonghegong. Along with this major roadway named for the site, in the last few decades Yonghegong has become a part of the daily consciousness of Beijing residents and visitors in a new way. In 1984 Line 2 of the Beijing subway system was completed, and a major subway station was constructed partially beneath Yonghegong and named for the site, simply Yonghegong in Chinese but in English signage variably “Yonghegong Lama Temple” or “Yonghe Lamasery” (Figs. 2 and 3). The Yonghegong station today is not only a Line 2 stop, but is also a major interchange for commuters transferring to the North-South Line 5, making Yonghegong, in name at least, a part of the daily lives of millions of Beijing commuters.¹⁰

Today the typical visitor to Yonghegong arrives by subway, climbing up from the underground station and emerging at ground level through a doorway in the rear wall of the monastery site. The doorway of the subway station has been designed to integrate stylistically with the Qing architectural style of Yonghegong. (Fig. 4) The porch of the subway doorway includes a grey-tiled roof that echoes the grey roofs of the rear halls of Yonghegong, visible from the street below. Beneath its roof, the subway door and porch are painted red to match the plastered brick wall surrounding the site. The porch itself reflects a traditional gate type called a “hanging lotus gate” or “hanging flower gate” (*chuihuamen* 垂花門), with openwork transom panels, “sparrow braces” (*queti* 雀替) and “pendant posts” (*xuzhu* 虛柱) all in traditional styles.

¹⁰ The Beijing subway transported a one-day record 8.39 million people on 4/28/2012. “Beijing subway handles record number of passengers,” *China Daily* < http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2012-04/30/content_15178199.htm > (accessed 7/5/2012).

The Qing stylistic modeling even extends to the signboard for the subway stop. Rather than the bland, contemporary signboards in modern character fonts that mark most Beijing subways, the Yonghegong subway stop signboard is in the form of a column couplet plaque (*yinglian* 楹联). In this case, rather than the more traditional two columns displaying two plaques with a paired poetic couplet, the entrance has only a single plaque hung on the right doorway pilaster, reading “Yonghegong Subway Stop” and written in a style of calligraphy that appears handwritten.¹¹ Such calligraphic displays, particularly in the Qianlong emperor’s calligraphic style, are ubiquitous at Yonghegong and other Qing imperial sites.

The design of this entrance in an imitation of traditional architectural styles displays a decorative exuberance atypical for Beijing subway stops. More curiously, the stop was completed with Subway Line 2 in 1971 during the height of the Cultural Revolution, a period in which traditional styles of architecture and calligraphy were criticized as “feudal” and “counter-revolutionary,” and many historical sites were being demolished as the capital was modernizing.¹² As was the case with the protection of Yonghegong and other historical sites during the violent early stages of the Cultural Revolution, credit for the subway stop design is given to Premier Zhou Enlai 周恩来 (1949-1976). Zhou approved a design that maintained the historical integrity of Yonghegong while allowing for the structural necessities of a subway stop.¹³ This included gutting the northwest section of Yonghegong, including the rear wall and northwest tower building, reconstructing it in concrete and steel, and then creating a new façade for the south side of the tower with traditional building materials. The subway stop is a fitting

¹¹ Although the signboard is in a traditional format, the second character of the sign, *tie* 铁, is written in the modern, simplified form.

¹² “北京地铁诞生记：周总理称筹建地铁是为备战” (“A Record of the Birth of the Beijing Subway: Premier Zhou called for preparations to build the subway”), 北京日报 (*Beijing Daily*), September 28, 2007, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/theory/2007-09/28/content_6799411.htm> (accessed January 26, 2011).

¹³ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 277.

prelude to the site as a whole, and represents the Central Government's recognition of the political, cultural and historical value of Yonghegong.

Turning left onto Yonghegong Avenue, the visitor walks the length of the site on the sidewalk, following the west wall.¹⁴ Rising above the wall and the grey roofs of subsidiary structures just inside, we glimpse the yellow roofs of some of the main halls of Yonghegong. (Fig. 5) In the Qing period, the yellow tile roofs and glinting, gilded finials of these halls announced the imperial character of the site to passers-by. They are still impressive, and beckon the visitor to enter the site. Today, in front of the west wall and across the street along the opposite side of Yonghegong Avenue are numerous small shops, most of which specialize in Buddhist paraphernalia.

Overview of the Site

This study will analyze the architecture and sculpture of Yonghegong in detail, but I will begin with a brief overview of the architecture and sculpture at the site, followed by a brief history. The area of the Yonghegong open to the public today, what I will call the “ritual core” of Yonghegong, is only one section of an expansive complex. That public area is roughly 400 meters long from south to north and covers a total area of 23,131.8 square meters.¹⁵ However, the total area of the Yonghegong complex, including the monastic residences and educational facilities to the east of the public area, covers 66,000 square meters.¹⁶ This total area is roughly

¹⁴ The wall is 3.9 meters high, painted red and capped with a grey-tiled roof. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 227. The red paint, known as “red plaster” (*hongni* 紅泥 or *honghui* 紅灰), is a mixture of lime, red earth and ochre, and applied to the walls of formal buildings and city walls. Qinghua Guo notes that the proportion of lime to red earth to ochre is 5:11:5, and the thickness after drying is 0.13 *cun*. Qinghua Guo, *A Visual Dictionary of Chinese Architecture* (Mulgrave, Australia: Images Publishing, 2002), 42. Cary Liu uses the term *hongni* 紅泥. Cary Y. Liu, “The Ch'ing Dynasty Wen-Yüan-Ko Imperial Library: Architecture and the Ordering of Knowledge,” (Ph. D. thesis, Princeton University, 1997), 326, (UMI 9727037).

¹⁵ Wang Shu, ed., *Lamasery of Harmony and Peace* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2002), n.p.

¹⁶ Lai and Chang, “Yung-ho Temple,” 133.

the same as the estimated dimensions of the site during its heyday in the mid- eighteenth century, however the specific makeup of the areas outside of the ritual core was different.¹⁷ A map of the capital produced by the court in 1750, the “Qianlong Period Complete Map of the Capital” (*Qianlong jingcheng quantu* 乾隆京城全圖, henceforth QLJCQT), demonstrates that large portions of the site to the east of the ritual core included architectural complexes that no longer exist in their original form.¹⁸ (Fig. 6) Another detailed plan of the site produced in the early twentieth century by Bernd Melchers and provided in Lessing’s *Yung-ho-kung*, shows a later iteration of the ritual core, with the addition of the also no longer extant Temple to Guandi complex extending to the west.¹⁹ (Figs. 9 and 10)

The lost eastern section was known as the Eastern Academy (*Dongshuyuan* 東書院),²⁰ a large residential garden that was the birthplace of the Qianlong emperor and included palaces, covered walkways, terraces and courtyards. (Fig. 7) It was reportedly significantly damaged by Japanese troops during the Boxer Uprising in 1900. Another section south of the Eastern Academy included monastic dormitories and residential compounds for various Mongolian reincarnate lamas, known as *khutukhtu* in Mongolian and *tulku* in Tibetan (S. *nirmāṇakāya*; T. *sprul sku*; Mo. *khubilgan* or *khutukhtu*; “emanation body”). (Fig. 8) Today, newly built monastic residential and educational areas have replaced the Eastern Academy and make up a significant portion of the total area of Yonghegong. Outside the western wall of the ritual core

¹⁷ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 210.

¹⁸ The complete map is provided online by the (Japanese) National Institute of Informatics Digital Silk Road Project Digital Archive of Toyo Bunko Rare Books, < <http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/II-11-D-802/>>, (accessed January, 2011).

¹⁹ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, n.p.

²⁰ Although I will use pinyin Romanization of the site name, Yonghegong, for individual halls I will use the English translations. This follows a rather widely used convention seen for example in Geremie Barmé, *The Forbidden City* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008), and Young-tsu Wong, *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). The Chinese name will be given on the first appearance, and Appendix 1 provides a list of the Chinese names and their English forms for reference. For architectural terminology, unless otherwise stated, I am relying on Guo, *A Visual Dictionary of Chinese Architecture*.

was the Temple to Guandi (*Guandimiao* 關帝廟), a deity typically described as the Chinese God of War, but whose worship was much wider in the Qing period. It was a separate compound with its own southern gate, but was also accessible from the ritual core through a building called the Yamāntaka Tower (*Yamandagalou* 雅曼達嘎) that connected the northernmost section of Yonghegong to the temple with a short, walled passageway. Both the Guandi temple and the Yamāntaka tower seem to post-date the 1750 map, but are shown on the Melchers plan. (Fig. 10) The Temple to Guandi was dismantled sometime after the 1940s, probably to improve traffic flow on Yonghegong Dajie.

The plans of the Eastern Academy, Temple to Guandi, and the ritual core itself follow a form standard to Chinese architecture, the courtyard compound (*siheyuan* 四合院, “four-sided enclosed courtyard”). It provides the basic ground plan for Chinese sites ranging from the simplest Beijing residential *hutong*, to complex Buddhist and Daoist temple sites, to the vast expanses of the Forbidden City. In its most basic form, the courtyard compound is oriented north-south with halls and walls surrounding a central courtyard, typically arranged with a main hall to the north and subsidiary halls on the east and west sides of the courtyard. The plan is very practical, with the central courtyard providing access to the outside, air circulation, light penetration, as well as privacy and security. The ritual core of Yonghegong is laid out as a series of courtyards, and visitors today proceed through the site south to north.

The first courtyard, the “Courtyard of Ceremonial Gateways” (*Pailouyuan* 牌樓院), acts both as an initial transitional space from secular exterior to sacred interior and as an introduction to the major symbolic themes of the site, conveyed through the inscriptions on the monumental ceremonial gateways known as *pailou* 牌樓, standard features at traditional Chinese sites. (Fig. 11) The second courtyard, the “Courtyard of the Imperial Carriageway” (*Niandaoyuan* 輦道院),

is a long courtyard, more narrow than the first, and enclosing a wide path bordered by ginkgo trees and bushes, a serene, tunnel-like pathway into the monastery interior. (Figs. 12 and 13) To either side of the walls of the courtyard were once various monastic residences, some of which survive although their function has changed. At the end of the long path is the colorfully-tiled Gate of Luminous Peace (*Zhaotaimen* 昭泰門) that marks the formal entrance to the next section. (Fig. 14)

The third courtyard, the Courtyard of the Gate of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghemenyuan* 雍和門院), is the largest open area at the site, a park-like space filled with ancient trees and other plantings. (Fig. 15) In the corners of the south end are a Drum Tower and Bell Tower, standard features of Buddhist monasteries. (Figs. 16 and 17) At the north corners of the courtyard are octagonal pavilions that protect stone stele with imperial inscriptions dating to the inauguration of Yonghegong as a monastery in 1744. (Fig. 18) The main hall at the north end is the Gate of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghemmen* 雍和門), the first of the major axial halls at Yonghegong. (Fig. 19) These axial halls are easily identified by their imperial yellow roof tiles, marking their special status in the imperial architectural hierarchy.²¹ Passing through this hall, we encounter the first sculptural icons at Yonghegong, the welcoming figure of Budai Heshang 布袋和尚, the “cloth bag monk,” (Fig. 20) the four protective deities known as the Four Heavenly Kings (*Si Tianwang* 四天王, S. *Lokapāla*), (Figs. 21-24) and another protector deity, Skanda (*Weito* 韋馱).²² (Fig. 25)

²¹ For details of the imperial architectural hierarchy in the Qing period, see Liang Sicheng 梁思成, *Qingshi Yingzao Zeli* 清式营造则例 (“Qing style building regulations”) (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1981).

²² Sanskrit names of deities will be used, with a few exceptions particular to the Chinese pantheon such as Budai, given in Chinese. Names of the deities in other relevant languages will be provided on the first appearance and in Appendix 2. Groups of deities will be identified in English (e.g. “Four Heavenly Kings”).

The next section is the Courtyard of the Palace of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghegongyuan* 雍和宮院), which includes two large axial halls and a number of important subsidiary structures. The first axial hall is the Palace of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghegong* 雍和宮) that gives its name to the entire site.²³ (Fig. 26) It houses images of the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* (*Sanshifo* 三世佛) (Figs. 27-30) and the *Sixteen Arhats* (*Shiliu luohan* 十六羅漢). (Figs. 31-49) Behind it is the next axial hall, the Hall of Eternal Protection (*Yongyoudian* 永佑殿), (Fig. 50) that enshrines what may be a unique grouping of three buddhas that I will refer to as the Buddhas of Longevity. (Fig. 51) Subsidiary structures in this courtyard include the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion (*Lamashuo paiting* 喇嘛說牌亭), located between the Gate of Harmony and Peace and the Palace of Harmony and Peace, that displays the text of an imperial essay titled “On Lamas” (*Lamashuo* 喇嘛說). (Fig. 52) On the east and west sides of the courtyard are the Four Study Halls (*Sixuedian* 四學殿), four buildings originally designated for providing instruction in the monastic curriculum. The first two are nearly identical two-storied buildings. On the east side, the south hall is the Esoteric Hall (*Mizongdian* 密宗殿), and across the courtyard from it on the west side is the Exoteric Hall (*Xianzongdian* 顯宗殿), or Lecture Hall (*Jiangjingdian* 講經殿). (Fig. 53) The second two are nearly identical one-storied buildings. On the east side, the north hall is the Medicine Master Hall (*Yaoshidian* 藥師殿²⁴), and across the courtyard from it is the on the west

²³ As the name of this building, on the multilingual name board of the façade, is the same as the name for the site, to avoid confusion it is typically referred to in Chinese as the *Yonghegongdian* 雍和宮殿 (“Palace of Harmony and Peace Hall”) or *Yonghegongzhengdian* 雍和宮正殿 (“Palace of Harmony and Peace Main Hall”). To accord with my translation conventions, this would be rendered as the rather wordy “Main Hall of the Palace of Harmony and Peace.” My use of English names for the individual halls avoids this, allowing the site to remain *Yonghegong* and this structure to remain the Palace of Harmony and Peace throughout.

²⁴ Although the Sanskrit name *Bhaiṣajyaguru* is often applied to this deity, its origins are in Central Asia, making the use of the Sanskrit name problematic. I will use Medicine Master throughout, based on the suggestion by Amy McNair. See Amy McNair, “Art, Religion & Politics in Medieval China: The Dunhuang Cave of the Zhai Family

side is the Wheel of Time Hall or Kālacakra Hall (*Shilundian* 時輪殿), or Mathematics Hall (*Shuxuedian* 數學殿). (Fig. 54) Each hall is filled with a complex array of sculptures, paintings, and embroideries related to the specific area of study to which the individual hall is dedicated.

Although it is not immediately obvious due to the widely separated flights of steps, a visitor moving along the axis of the site from the first three courtyards to the Hall of Eternal Protection is also climbing steadily upward, from ground level to a plateau with the two final courtyards approximately ten feet higher and extending to the rear wall of Yonghegong.²⁵ The Hall of Eternal Protection acts as a gate to the first of these upper courtyards, the Courtyard of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel (*Falundianyuan* 法輪殿院), a large open area with carefully pruned pine trees in the center. The axial hall at the north is the main building for daily rituals at Yonghegong, the Hall of the Dharma Wheel (*Falundian* 法輪殿), a spectacular hall that is the most singularly Tibetan style building at the site in both architectural form and function. (Fig. 55) At the center of the interior is the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, a twenty-foot tall statue of the important Tibetan Buddhist monastic reformer Tsongkhapa (T. *tsong kha pa* 1357-1419), founder of the Gélukpa (T. *dge lugs pa*) monastic order to which Yonghegong is dedicated. (Fig. 56)

The Hall of the Dharma Wheel is flanked by two other buildings that appear identical on the outside, but are completely different in their interiors: the Panchen Tower (*Banchanlou* 班禪樓) on the east (Fig 57), used today for didactic displays, and the Ordination Platform Tower (*Jietailou* 戒臺樓) on the west, the entire interior of which is taken up by a huge, three-level platform used for initiation and ordination rituals. (Fig 58) At the east and west sides of the

by Ning Qiang,” *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 65, no. 1 (2005): 152. She cites Shin’ichi Nagai, “Bhaiṣajyaguru Statues in China,” *Bukkyō geijutsu* no. 159 (April 1985): 49-62.

²⁵ Elevations are based on GPS measurements provided by Google Earth. Imagery dated 3/28/2012, accessed 11/8/2012.

courtyard are the rather unimaginatively named Eastern Side Hall (*Dongpeidian* 東配殿), housing statues of a group of fierce-looking guardian deities known as the Five Great Dharmapāla (*Wudajingang* 五大金剛), and the Western Side Hall (*Xipeidian* 西配殿), with statues of the most prominent bodhisattvas, a group called the Eight Great Close Sons (*Badajinfozi* 八大進佛子, T. *nye ba'i sras chen brgyad*) who stand four to either side of an image of Śākyamuni Buddha. (Fig 59)

Beyond the Hall of the Dharma Wheel is the final courtyard of Yonghegong, the Courtyard of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (*Wanfugeyuan* 萬福閣院). Towering above the courtyard is the central hall, the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (*Wanfuge* 萬福閣), a three storied architectural marvel that connects to two side halls via covered bridges. (Fig 60) The pavilion itself enshrines another immense statue, the fifty-nine-foot tall *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva*. (Fig 61) The two flanking halls that connect to the central pavilion are the Pavilion of Eternal Health (*Yongkangge* 永康閣) to the east, with a large rotating sutra cabinet in the interior, and the Pavilion of Prolonged Peace (*Yansuige* 延綏閣) to the west, the interior dominated by another rotating display known as “Open the Blossom, Behold the Buddha” (*Huakai jianfo* 花開見佛) that reveals meditating buddhas behind large, opening and closing lotus petals.

At the east and west walls on the southern end of the courtyard are similar, two-storied halls. To the east is the Tower of the Buddha's Reflection (*Zhaofolou* 照佛樓) (Fig 62), with a standing Śākyamuni Buddha (of a type known as the “Sandalwood Buddha” or “Udayana Buddha”) flanked by his close disciples Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa, all displayed in an elaborately carved altar frame. (Fig 63) At the west of the courtyard is the aforementioned Yamāntaka Tower that connected to the Temple to Guandi, which houses images of protector

deities. (Fig 64) At the rear of the courtyard, behind the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness and making up the rear wall of Yonghegong, is a trio of two-storied linked halls. At the center is the Tower of Complete Pacification (*Suichenglou* 綏成樓), and to either side the Eastern Mountain-according Tower (*Dongshunshanlou* 東順山樓) and the Western Mountain-according Tower (*Xishunshanlou* 西順山樓). The ground floor of the central Tower of Complete Pacification has statues of three Tibetan Buddhist deities: Sitātapatrā (“Goddess of the White Parasol,” *Dabaisangaifomu* 大白傘蓋佛母; T. *gdugs dkar*) at the center, Sitatārā (“White Tara”; *Baidumu* 白度母; T. *sgrol dkar*) to the east, and Śyāmatārā (“Green Tara”; *Ludumu* 綠度母; T. *sgrol ljang*) to the west.

Phases of Development

Having travelled through the site’s physical layout in space in the overview above, let us turn to the site’s development over time. Beginning its Qing dynasty history as a prince’s mansion in the Kangxi period (1662-1722) and travelling palace in the Yongzheng period, the most dramatic development of the site came during the Qianlong period, due to the intertwined political, religious and personal importance of the site to its imperial patron. Many old buildings were revamped and many new structures were added in 1744 when the site became a monastic college; later, the climax of the site, the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness group, was added in 1750; in 1780 two major buildings, the Panchen Tower and the Ordination Platform Tower, were added; and the last major addition to the site, the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion, was built in 1792, finalizing the ritual core section in roughly the layout visitors see today. Although throughout most of its long history Yonghegong was a private, imperial temple, in 1952 a dramatic change in function

came with the opening of the site to the public. The long evolution of Yonghegong can be divided into four broad phases, detailed below.²⁶

Phase I: Imperial Prince's Mansion, 1694- 1722.

From 1694 (Kangxi 33) to 1722 (Yongzheng 1), the site was the residence for prince Yinzhen 胤禛, the fourth son of the Kangxi emperor and later his successor as the Yongzheng emperor. Made a Prince of the Blood of the third degree (*beile* 貝勒) in 1694, the prince moved to the site of his new residence, formerly a residence for wealthy Ming court eunuchs, in the fifth month of Kangxi 34 (1695). Until 1709, the site was known as Zhenbeilefu 禛貝勒府 (the Mansion of Prince [*beile*] Zhen 禛). Since Yinzhen was the fourth son of the emperor, the residence was also known popularly as the Fourth Lord's Mansion (*Siyefu* 四爺府).²⁷ In 1709, when the prince's rank was elevated to the first degree (*qinwang* 親王), and his title changed to Yong 雍, the name was accordingly changed to Yongqinwangfu 雍親王府 ("the Mansion of Prince [*qinwang*] Yong").²⁸

Phase II: Travelling Palace (1725-1744).

Prince Yong took the throne as the Yongzheng emperor in 1722, and in 1725 the emperor ordered that his former residence be reconstructed as a "travelling palace" (*xinggong* 行宮), a designation for a temporary residence used by the emperor and his entourage when away from the palace. After completion in that year it was given the new name Yonghegong. A decade

²⁶ This overview summarizes Niu, *Yonghegong*, 261-282.

²⁷ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 262.

²⁸ Ibid. For imperial princely ranks, see Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 304. For ranks granted to the Yongzheng emperor, see Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off, 1943), 915-16.

later, nineteen days after the death of the Yongzheng emperor on Oct. 8 of 1735 (Yongzheng 13), the emperor's coffin was moved from the Palace of Celestial Purity (*Qianqinggong*) in the Forbidden City to the building later known as the Hall of Eternal Protection (*Yongyouudian*) in Yonghegong. The coffin remained there for over a year until the emperor's interment in the Tailing 泰陵 Tomb in the Western Qing Tombs complex. To reflect this important function, during the first year of Qianlong (1736), the roof tiles of the axial structures at the site were changed from green to imperial yellow, indicating structures used by the emperor.²⁹ The site continued to be used as an ancestral shrine for the Yongzheng emperor and later the Qianlong emperor throughout the rest of the Qing period.

Phase III: Monastic College (1744-1952).

This is the longest period in the history of the site without a major change in function. There were three major periods of building at the site, the first and most significant from Qianlong 9 (1744) to Qianlong 15 (1750), when the site was extended to include Courtyards I and II, and halls were modified and built to turn the site into a monastery and monastic college. The QLJCQT map provides a clear image of what was probably the extent of the site in 1750 or just before. Other than the site's major patron, the Qianlong emperor, the other individual with the most influence over the reconstruction project was the influential Tibetan Buddhist lama Rölpe Dorjé (*Ruobi Duoqi* 若必多吉; T. *rol-pa'i rdo-rje*, 1717-1786), the emperor's personal Tibetan Buddhist guru, adviser on religious affairs, and key go-between with the Tibetan and Mongolian constituencies of the empire.³⁰ He was a tulku, the third in the lineage of Changkya

²⁹ Lai and Chang, "Yung-ho Temple," 134.

³⁰ A number of detailed studies of the life and teachings of Rölpe Dorjé have been done. A biography written by one of his disciples is Thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, *Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje'i rnam thar* [The Biography of Changkya Rölpe Dorjé] (Lanzhou: Lan su'u mi rigs par khang [Gansu People's Publishing House],

Khutukhtus (*Zhangjia hutuketu* 章嘉呼圖克圖; T. *lcang skya ho thog thu*; Mo. *Janggiy-a qutuy-tu*).³¹ He was brought to court as a boy during the Yongzheng period, where he was educated with the young prince who was to become the Qianlong emperor, an experience that probably contributed to the enduring connection between the two. He was a respected lama, known for his writings and for his spiritual practice, as well as being fluent in Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese and Manchu and an effective imperial representative and negotiator. In Qianlong-era texts he is often referred to as the *Zhangjia Guoshi* 章嘉國師 (“Zhangjia Imperial Preceptor”), a title given to him by the Qianlong emperor.

The second period of major building was during Qianlong 44 (1779), and was inspired by the visit to Beijing of the important Tibetan Buddhist leader, the Sixth Panchen Lama, Lobsang Palden Yeshe (T. *blo-bzang gpal-ldan ye-shes*, 1738–1780). During this period, the Panchen Tower was constructed for his private use, and the twin Ordination Platform Tower was built for use in various initiation rituals he performed for the Qianlong emperor. The last major structure added to the site was the *Lama Shuo* Stele Pavilion, constructed in Qianlong 57 (1792). With this final addition, the evolution of the imperial symbolism at Yonghegong was complete. The comprehensive interpretation of Yonghegong’s message of imperial universalism that I provide will therefore be what linguists might call a *synchronic* interpretation, the messages of the site at one point in time, rather than a *diachronic*, or developmental, interpretation of the evolution of symbolism at the site. Both are possible, particularly at a site with the longevity of Yonghegong,

1989. It was translated from the original Tibetan into Chinese in 1988. Tuguan Luosang Xiji Nima 土觀洛桑卻吉尼瑪, *Zhangjia guoshi Ruobiduoji zhuan* 章嘉國師若必多吉傳, ed. Chen Qingying 陳慶英 and Ma Lianlong 馬連龍 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1988). Later studies based primarily on his biography include Wang Xiangyun, “Tibetan Buddhism at the Court of Qing: The Life and Work of Lcang-Skya Rol-Pa'i-Rdo-Rje, 1717-86” (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1995), (UMI 9539056) and Illich, “Selections.” A translation of one of Rölpe Dorje’s major works is Jeffrey Hopkins, *Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1995).

³¹ Qing court documents refer to him as the third in the lineage, but Tibetan sources list him as second.

but to bring back the long-overlooked political messages of the site, 1792 provides a point late in the Qianlong emperor's reign at which the message of imperial universalism was fundamentally complete. Although that message is the focus of this study, a number of additions to the site, such as the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* icon, will be addressed as examples of the continuing political significance of the site in later periods.

Phase IV: Open to the Public (1952-Present).

The modern history of Yonghegong begins soon after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The first renovation of the site, initiated by Premier Zhou Enlai, lasted from 1952 until 1954, after which the site was briefly opened to the public for three days in February 1954, attracting some 30,000 visitors.³² On March 4 of 1961, the State Council (*Guowuyuan* 國務院) designated Yonghegong as "the first national key cultural preservation unit"³³ to be administered by the Yonghegong Managing Department (*Yonghegong guanlichu* 雍和宮管理處). Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, the site was restored in two phases. During the first phase, the site was closed to the public for large-scale projects done by the Ancient Architecture Engineering Agency of the Beijing Architectural Renovation Department, 2nd Company.³⁴ The second phase of restoration was done after the site's official opening to the public on the lunar New Year of 1981 (February 5), and organized to allow tourism and religious rites to carry on undisturbed by the renovation project.³⁵

³² Niu, *Yonghegong*, 275.

³³ "全國第一批重點文物保護單位." Niu, *Yonghegong*, 275.

³⁴ *Beijing shi fangxiu er gongsi gujian gongcheng chu* 北京市房修二公司古建工程處. Today it is simply the Beijing Ancient Architecture Engineering Company (*Beijing shi gujian gongcheng gongsi* 北京市古建工程公司). Ibid., 276.

³⁵ The scale of the renovation project is clear from the funds spent, listed in Niu: 1979, 8 million CNY for the axial halls; 1989, 500,000 CNY for the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* statue; 1993, 2.47 million CNY for the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness trio of halls; 1994, 18 million CNY for monastic dormitories; 1998, in the area outside the east

In adapting the site for public use, some requirements were met by adding new structures, such gift shops (just south of the Gate of Luminous Peace) and ticket booths and offices for the tour guides (in the Pailou Courtyard). Public restrooms were also built just outside the rear courtyard, but are not visible and are accessible down a short stairway. Other facilities were unobtrusively fit into existing buildings, such as the small gift shops tucked between the Four Study Halls in the Courtyard of the Palace of Harmony and Peace, and next to the Yamantaka Tower in the rear courtyard. In 1984, the Panchen Tower, the Ordination Platform Tower, and the East Mountain-according Tower were adapted as exhibition halls.³⁶ They display various cultural relics important for their aesthetic, historical or contemporary political value, including some of the Qianlong emperor's personal objects, Tibetan Buddhist sculpture and paintings, Qing-era documents, and didactic displays on historical topics relevant to Yonghegong. Many topics and objects are chosen to emphasize the status of Tibet as a long-standing part of China.

Today, Mao's oft-quoted adage "Use the past to serve the present" (*Gu wei jin yong* 古为今用) reverberates through Yonghegong, and is reflected in the multivalent character of the site. The temple testifies to the rich history of Beijing and plays a key role in promoting Beijing tourism domestically and internationally. The palatial architecture reflects the glories of Beijing's imperial past (officially, the glories of the workers who created such wonders of traditional architecture). Furthermore, the site advertises the government's assertion of the harmonious multicultural character of the modern nation, the legitimacy of the PRC's authority in Tibet (by implication as a continuation of Qing rule), and the success of governmentally-

wall of the ritual core, structures were demolished, residents were resettled and plantings and landscaping added for security and fire safety at a cost of 5 million CNY; 1999, 7 million CNY for the educational facilities of the Yonghegong Tibetan Academy (*Yonghegong Zangwen shuyuan* 和宮管藏文書院). Ibid., 279-80. In 2001, over 14 million CNY was spent to restore the Courtyard of the Imperial Carriageway, including the granite stones of the pathway and the trees and other plantings. Ibid., 281-82.

³⁶ Ibid., 278.

approved religious orthodoxy (in this case of the Gélukpa order of Tibetan Buddhism). Finally, as a working monastery, the site is a lively venue for a growing popular interest in Tibetan Buddhism, reflected in the active daily worship at the site and particularly during special ritual events. Moving from the layout of Yonghegong and the developmental history of the site, let us turn now to an examination of academic studies of Yonghegong and the challenge that the physical and historical complexity of the site has provided to scholars.

Previous Scholarship

In the early twentieth century Tibetan Buddhism was largely denigrated in the West, and referred to as “Lamaism,” deriving from a Chinese term (*lamajiao* 喇嘛教) but with a more pejorative connotation in English usage.³⁷ As Donald Lopez has described, “Lamaism” suggested that the tradition was something other than Buddhism, and descriptions of Tibetan Buddhist art were rich with value-laden terms, highlighting the ‘debased’ aspects of *yab-yum* figures in sexual embrace or the ‘demonic’ character of wrathful deities like Mahkala.³⁸

When Yonghegong appears in early twentieth century publications, it is often described in a negative light. An influential example is certainly Juliet Bredon’s 1919 study of Beijing that reflects some of this attitude in the author’s comments on the “unwholesome moral atmosphere of the Yung Ho Kung.”³⁹ Of the Mongol monks at the site she notes “We can read in their disagreeable accents and vulgar gestures that the priests are lazy, ignorant and of low social standing.”⁴⁰ She is careful to say that those more familiar with the site assure her that there are

³⁷ The term *lamajiao* 喇嘛教, or “Lamaism,” is akin to *fojiao* 佛教 “Buddhism” or *tianzhujiao* 天主教 “Catholicism”.

³⁸ Donald S. Lopez Jr., ““Lamaism” and the Disappearance of Tibet,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 1 (Jan., 1996): 3-25.

³⁹ Bredon, *Peking*, 191.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

“Lamas of genuine religious feeling and vast erudition” to be found there.⁴¹ However, in very value-laden terms she goes on to note the “cruel and vindictive countenance of Maitreya”⁴² in the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness, and in a longer passage:

The fortunate visitor may chance upon a secondary service in one of these side halls conducted for novices who murmur their prayers with wandering eyes and interrupt their devotions by intervals of horse-play. Such chapels are full of tawdry paintings of demons and she-devils, freaks of diabolical imagination, all part of the spurious apparatus of terrorism of a religion whose hold is the hold of fear. Obscene figures of the Gods of Desire that drive the world, draped in yellow silk shawls, stand upon the altars among butter lamps, conch shell trumpets, wine cups made from human skulls, and other strange things of which the priests themselves often do not know the meaning. (...) Unfortunately among the Lamas, the grosser forms of demonology and superstition, introduced from the dread cult of Shiva, have overlaid the nobility of the original Buddhist conception.⁴³

Such descriptions are typical, and reflect general Western sentiment of the day, seeing Yonghegong as yet another symbol of the decay of China and its need of imperialist reeducation. Standing in stark contrast to these negative depictions were the first two major Western studies of Yonghegong. The earliest was Georges Bouillard’s 1931 *Le Temple Des Lamas: Temple Lamaïste De Yung Ho Kung À Péking; Description, Plans, Photos, Cérémonies*, an overview of the site’s architecture and sculpture with a brief treatment of the history of Tibetan Buddhism and Yonghegong.⁴⁴ This was followed by Ferdinand Lessing’s 1942 *Yung-ho-kung, an Iconography of the Lamaist Cathedral in Peking, with Notes on Lamaist Mythology and Cult*, still widely cited despite being only the first volume of an incomplete multivolume series. It is an exhaustive study of the iconography of two early halls of the monastery, but is most often cited for its translation of the imperial stele inscriptions. Bouillard and Lessing’s interest in Yonghegong and in Tibetan Buddhism more generally, found also in the work of Giuseppe Tucci

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 188.

⁴³ Ibid., 190.

⁴⁴ G[eorges] Bouillard, *Le Temple Des Lamas: Temple Lamaïste De Yung Ho Kung À Péking; Description, Plans, Photos, Cérémonies* (Pékin: A. Nachbaur, 1931).

(1894-1984) and others, reflected what was at the time a limited but growing Western academic interest in Tibetan Buddhism.

In the early twentieth century Tibetan Buddhism was gaining wide popularity in China, a subject explored by Gray Tuttle in *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*.⁴⁵ This interest is seen in the publication of a series of Republican-era gazetteers on Yonghegong in the 1930s, providing interesting general information about the site at that time.⁴⁶ However, Jin Liang's *Yonghegong zhilue* 雍和宮志略 ("Yonghegong records summary"), originally published in 1953, was the first truly comprehensive study of the site, with detailed coverage of the history, architecture, art and other objects, as well as an introduction to the administration, education and lives of the monks and lamas at the monastery. A later comprehensive survey, Wei Kaizhao's 1985 *Yonghegong manlu* 雍和宮漫錄 ("Informal record of Yonghegong"), seems to be substantially based on Jin Liang's text with some additions.⁴⁷ Although a number of books in Chinese for general readers have appeared since 1985, the next comprehensive academic work on the site, simply titled *Yonghegong* 雍和宮, was compiled in 2001 by scholars with the Yonghegong editorial board led by Niu Song.⁴⁸ *Yonghegong* is certainly the most substantial work ever written on the site, providing a history of Tibetan Buddhism, a history of the site and its development through the twentieth century, important reincarnate lamas with a relationship to the site, a detailed study of the architecture, its construction and decoration, the sculpture at the

⁴⁵ Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ Meng zang weiyuanhui zhu ping banshichu 蒙藏委员会祝平办事处 (Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission Office), eds., *Yonghegong daoguansuo kanwu* 雍和宮導觀所刊物, 3 vols (Beiping: Yonghegong daoguansuo 雍和宮導觀所, 1934-1937), reprinted in Huang Xianian 黃夏年, ed., *Minguo Fojiao Qikan Wenxian Jicheng* 民國佛教期刊文獻集成 ("Republican-era Buddhist Periodical Documents Collection"), 204 volumes. (Beijing: Quan guo tushuguan wenxian suo wei fu zhi zhongxin 全國圖書館文獻縮微複製中心, 2006).

⁴⁷ Wei Kaizhao 魏開肇, *Yonghegong man lu* 雍和宮漫錄 ("Informal record of Yonghegong") ([Zhengzhou shi]: Henan ren min chu ban she and Henan sheng xin hua shu dian fa xing, 1985).

⁴⁸ Although Niu Song was the editor and not the author, to avoid the confusion of referring to the text by its name, *Yonghegong*, I will use his name as if he were the author throughout.

site and a history of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist sculpture, Tibetan Buddhist paintings, or *thangka* (T. *thang ka*), artifacts, inscriptions, and rituals.

Of course the vast Qing archives provide a treasure trove of primary sources on the site, and in 2004 the Yonghegong Administration Department in collaboration with the First Historical Archives of China published a twelve volume collection culled from the First Historical Archives collection in Beijing.⁴⁹ An important recent study that makes use of the Qing archives and brings an economic approach to understanding Yonghegong is “The Yung-ho Temple in the Ch’ien-lung Era: A Cultural and Economic Perspective” by Lai Hui-min 賴惠敏 and Chang Shu-ya 張淑雅.⁵⁰

This dissertation is greatly indebted to these groundbreaking studies of this important site, and particularly to *Yonghegong*, which provides a model of the kind of interdisciplinary approach that such a complex site requires. However, all of these studies have focused primarily on the religious role of Yonghegong as a Tibetan Buddhist monastery and monastic college, with less attention paid to the imperial symbolism at the site. Describing the almost overwhelming complexity of the site and its contents was apparently enough of a challenge for these scholars as none tried to interpret it as a unified symbolic program as I attempt in this study. Moreover, in all of these studies Yonghegong is presented as a seemingly disconnected collection of parts, and not as an interconnected whole.

⁴⁹ Zhongguo di yi lishi dangan guan 中國第一歷史檔案館 [First Historical Archives of China], and Yonghegong Guanlichu 雍和宮管理處 [Yonghegong Administration Department], *Qing Dai Yonghegong Dangan Shiliao* 清代雍和宮檔案史料 [Archival Historical Materials on Yonghegong in the Qing Dynasty] (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu sheying yishu chubanshe 中國民族攝影藝術出版社, 2004). The last volume goes up to 1786, near the end of the Qianlong era.

⁵⁰ Lai Hui-min 賴惠敏 and Chang Shu-ya 張淑雅, “Qing Qianlong shidai de Yonghegong — yige jingji wenhua cengmian de guancha” 清乾隆時代的雍和宮 — 一個經濟文化層面的觀察 (“The Yung-ho Temple in the Ch’ien-lung Era: A Cultural and Economic Perspective”). *Gugong Xueshu Jikan* 故宮學術季刊 (“Old Palace Art Studies Journal”) 23, no. 4 (2006): 131-64.

The Challenge of Yonghegong

One factor contributing to the complexity of Yonghegong is the layout, and the various divisions and sections it creates. First, the site, like most examples of Qing palace architecture, can be understood as a series of courtyards, a clear form of spatial division. For a visitor advancing through Yonghegong along the central axis the alternation of building and courtyard is clear, although the courtyards differ greatly in size and form, ranging from large and open areas to narrow spaces. Another division is between the axis and the periphery, that is, the pathway and the main buildings along the central axis of the site and the paths and buildings that make up the periphery to either side. In one section of the site the central path is elevated, emphasizing its distinction, and in many places the side paths become very constricted, in some cases with bottlenecks that are only a few meters wide. (Fig. 54)

This difference between axis and periphery is also reinforced by the layout. The subsidiary buildings do not always neatly associate themselves physically or functionally with the axial buildings. Unlike the Forbidden City, where the vast, peristyle courtyards with their surrounding, cloister-like colonnades of gabled-roof buildings called *chaofang* 朝房 are interrupted by paired, symmetrical “gate” buildings at the cardinal points, Yonghegong has subsidiary buildings that differ in size and are often staggered in relation to the axial buildings and their courtyards. This makes the specific association of axial buildings and side buildings unclear and thus the identification of a “courtyard” rather tenuous. Further complexity in the layout came from other sections of the Yonghegong compound, such as the Temple to Guandi (removed in the mid-twentieth century) outside the western wall of the main complex, the former grounds of the Eastern Academy (damaged in 1900 and later removed) to the east, and the

former residences for monks and *khutukhtu* (Mongolian reincarnate lamas) to the east and west of the first courtyards of the site.

Beyond the complexity of the layout, another challenge to perceiving a unity of message at Yonghegong is the sheer density of structures that makes up the ritual core. This density arose over time with the accumulation of buildings that throughout the Qianlong reign were fit into the limited, preexisting space, resulting finally in a very tightly compacted plan. The tight spaces, combined with tall, multistoried buildings and halls raised on high marble plinths, gives visitors moving along the periphery the sense at times that they are progressing through ornately decorated narrow canyons. For visitors moving along the axis there is a continuing unpredictable variation between wide, open courtyards and more narrow spaces between buildings.

Although this density may detract from a feeling that the site is a unified space, it does create a very aesthetically rewarding experience. Unlike the overpowering, even numbing sameness of the courtyards of the Forbidden City, designed in part to awe the visitor with their seeming endlessness, the sheer variety of sights and shifting spaces at Yonghegong is continually refreshing. A visitor's experience of the site is in one sense like that found in a classic residential "scholar's" garden, the layout concealing and revealing sights as one moves through it, but never providing a single, grand view. This 'conceal and reveal' effect magnifies the drama for the visitor as they discover the wonders within Yonghegong, the architectural spectacle increasing courtyard by courtyard to a crescendo at the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness, the last major structure at the site. Manufacturing awe and spectacle in this fashion is an important part of the imperial toolbox, but the complex plan also subdivides the site into a series of discrete units that has inhibited wider appreciation of the symbolic resonances at the site.

The impact of the sheer decorative exuberance of the buildings is matched if not exceeded by the dizzying array of paintings, sculptures and ritual objects in the interiors, an iconographic and visual profusion that can overwhelm specialist and non-specialist alike. Certain spectacular visions may remain with the contemporary visitor: the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* and *Colossal Tsongkhapa* sculptures, the curious mechanism of the “*Open the Blossom, Behold the Buddha*” display, the surprisingly open interior of the Ordination Platform Tower, and other wonders, but the innumerable painted and gilded deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon that fill every open space seem to lose their independent identities. As I will argue, the seeming comprehensiveness of this pantheon was part of the intended message of the site, but the vast and complex display can also cause a visitor quickly to become disoriented, and left with memories of parts, but again no sense of a whole.

This density and complexity may be one reason that studies of the site have not provided an interpretive framework for Yonghegong, and have documented the parts rather than attempt a more comprehensive interpretation. Another factor adding to this disconnected approach is that descriptions of the site often follow traditional Chinese conceptions of site plans as a series of courtyards, and organize their descriptions accordingly, courtyard by courtyard, connecting peripheral buildings with axial buildings even when this association is tenuous. This is the model followed by the two most comprehensive works on the site, Jin and Niu. Both organize their descriptions of the site in a linear fashion, moving south to north according to the sequential courtyard model, and addressing the architecture and the sculpture in separate chapters.

Both also note the eastern and western sections of the site that no longer exist. Jin adds his descriptions to the end of his survey of the ritual core. Niu describes the whole site as having

three ‘roads’ (*lu* 路) or districts: eastern, central and western.⁵¹ His eastern district includes the monastic dormitories in the south and the former Eastern Academy in the north (now the location of the Yonghegong Tibetan Academy, *Zangwenshuyuan* 藏文書院).⁵² The central district includes the ritual core section. The western district consisted of only the Temple to Guandi, which is no longer extant. Niu, like Jin, introduces the buildings of the ritual core courtyard by courtyard, each named for its major structure on the north side, e.g. “Courtyard of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness”. The discussion of the structures begins with the main structure, and then details the side halls. Adhering closely to this courtyard model, though, presents some problems; Niu mentions that the “Four Study Halls” function together,⁵³ but in introducing them he relies on the traditional courtyard model, discussing the first two of the study halls in one courtyard, and the second two in the next courtyard, with which they roughly correspond laterally, i.e. east-west, but not functionally.⁵⁴ Other sources organize the site similarly, linking halls to each other by numbering them from east to west for each courtyard.⁵⁵

Lessing also follows a courtyard model initially, but only details the first three courtyards and two halls in what was intended to be the first of a proposed four volume treatment of the site, the latter volumes of which unfortunately were never realized.⁵⁶ In his prefatory remarks Lessing indicates that he planned to cover the site hall by hall in his later volumes. Although this is a logical method, unfortunately the numbering of the halls follows the Melchers plan. (Fig. 9) The Melchers plan is still the most complete published plan of the site, and I depend on it

⁵¹ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 212.

⁵² Ibid. 213.

⁵³ Ibid. 233.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 232-33 for the Esoteric and Exoteric Halls, associated with the Palace of Harmony and Peace, and pp. 235-36 for the Medicine Master Hall and Wheel of Time Hall, associated with the Hall of Eternal Protection.

⁵⁵ See Wei, *Yonghegong man lu*, map; also Wang, *Lamasery*, map, n.p.

⁵⁶ Hartmut Walravens asserts that Wolfram Eberhard saw volume 2 completed in manuscript form, but that it has not been seen since. Personal communication, 2008. See also Ferdinand Lessing and Hartmut Walravens, *Ferdinand Lessing, (1882-1961): Sinologe, Mongolist Und Kenner Des Lamaismus: Material Zu Leben Und Werk, Mit Dem Briefwechsel Mit Sven Hedin* (Osnabrück: Zeller, 2000).

throughout this study for approximate sizes and distances of spaces at Yonghegong. However, it follows a numbering system for the halls that proceeds basically counterclockwise and includes the main halls in the northbound leg of the sweep. While this numbering may have followed standard Western architectural practice of the day, I suspect it would have proven unworkable for Lessing had he continued his project because it disregards any functional or symbolic relationship among the halls.⁵⁷ Further problematic is the designation of courtyards on the Melchers plan. All of the spaces between the axial buildings are designated as courtyards (or “courts”), and numbered I thru X, giving them all equal status as “courtyards” even when the space is very narrow and not enclosed by side buildings, such as court V or VIII. This becomes a problem when attempting to associate axial and peripheral buildings together as making up a single courtyard when they do not match up neatly. Of all the studies discussed, only Bouillard departs from the courtyard model entirely, noting the courtyards but addressing the site hall by hall. He also groups the halls broadly by function, beginning with the axial halls in sequence and then covering the subsidiary halls.

When it comes to description and analysis of the statues enshrined in the buildings in the ritual core, what I am calling the inner mandala, Jin and Niu both address them in different chapters than the architecture. Furthermore, both implicitly recognize an organizational arrangement of the statues that relates to their identities as exoteric (*xianzong* 顯宗) or esoteric (*mizong* 密宗) deities. Jin notes this distinction, but discusses the icons in the same courtyard-by-courtyard format as the architecture. Niu makes a more pronounced departure and, similar to

⁵⁷ Lessing indicates that the plan predated his study of the site, and that Melchers allowed him to use it. Lessing may have been adapting his analysis to the preexisting courtyard and hall designations on what is otherwise an excellent site plan. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, XVI.

Bouillard, first addresses the icons in the axial halls as exoteric deities, then turns to the icons of the peripheral halls as esoteric deities.

All of the examples above highlight the hermeneutic difficulties faced by scholars who have focused simply on the site's role as a Tibetan Buddhist monastery. Although the political and biographical significance of Yonghegong to the Qianlong emperor are duly noted in many of the studies discussed above, these issues are much less central to them than the site's Tibetan Buddhist significance. Of course, one reason for this is that none of these earlier studies had the advantage of being informed by the work of the "New Qing Studies" scholars that have brought a more complete understanding of the imperial universalist ideology that underpinned so much of the production of the Qing court.

One of these scholars is Patricia Berger. Berger's treatment of Yonghegong in her 2003 study of Buddhism and Buddhist art at the Qianlong court, *Empire of Emptiness*, while brief, more substantively addresses its multilayered character than any other study that preceded it.⁵⁸ She discusses Tibetan Buddhism as a tool not only for the promotion of the emperor's personal salvation, but also for national salvation (through the emperor's enlightened rule),⁵⁹ and for universal salvation (by creating the conditions for the coming of Maitreya, the future Buddha),⁶⁰ three dimensions of significance that inspired in part my model of the three spheres. She pointedly emphasizes what I have asserted were the main lacunae in previous studies, noting the biographical/personal and political aspects of the site:

⁵⁸ Patricia A. Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003) 116-122.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 99-101.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 116.

As a site of practice and patronage the Yonghegong thus existed in a space that was at once deeply personal to the emperor, embodying his relationship to his father, and blatantly political - an overt sign of his own fatherly kindness to the Mongols...⁶¹

Her overview of the site and its significance details these various associations, tying them to related themes in the Buddhist art of the Qianlong court.

My approach to Yonghegong, which has evolved from Berger's, takes into account the religious, political and personal dimensions of the site noted in previous scholarship as well as of the multidimensional character of Qing imperial ideology emphasized in recent studies to read the multilayered messages Yonghegong was designed to convey. To bring order to this enterprise, I use an interpretive model inspired by and adapted from the mandala as, in part, an organizing principle. Although the mandala arises from what contemporary thought might classify as a "religious" context, the distinctions among religious, political and personal realms were not so rigidly defined at the Qing court. As I will detail in the next two chapters, the inner/outer mandalas and the three spheres provide both a structure and the unifying thematic thread of imperial universalism that contribute to tying these various elements together, allowing a comprehensive interpretation of the site at its peak of development by the Qianlong emperor.

⁶¹ Ibid., 117.

Chapter Two: Mandala as Interpretive Frame

The challenge of Yonghegong arises from the number of interpretive threads that can be followed at the site due to its size and physical complexity, historical evolution, and multidimensional symbolism. This chapter suggests that, rather than making up a jumbled Gordian knot, these threads can instead be woven into a more ordered pattern inspired by the Indo-Tibetan tradition of the mandala.⁶² The original Sanskrit term *maṇḍala* can simply mean anything circular, with a core (S. *maṇḍa*) and an enclosing periphery (S. *la*).⁶³ However, common usage of the term today derives from its understanding in Indo-Tibetan tantric practice, where it is defined by Giuseppe Tucci as “... a geometric projection of the world reduced to an essential pattern.”⁶⁴ Often the mandala centers on a deity, and tantric practitioners (S. *tāntrika*) visualize themselves as this deity.

Although my adaptation of the mandala as an interpretive model is a radical shift from its intended function in ritual and meditation, where it aids in the realization of ‘emptiness,’ it provides two metaphors for the systematic presentation and discussion of both the site and the symbolism found at Yonghegong. The first takes the mandala at its most abstract: a schema that conceptually organizes diverse objects and phenomena into predetermined spatial relationships, what I will call “spatial typology.”⁶⁵ This will inform my designation of the physical site of

⁶² The weaving metaphor itself is also (clumsily) borrowed from the Indo-Tibetan tantras, texts and practices that mesh together complex forms of art, ritual and meditation with the more linear threads of exposition found in the sutras (S. *sūtra*, “thread”), creating the tantra (S. *tantra*, “warp (threads)” or “something woven”).

⁶³ Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought and Social Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 252. Leidy provides this etymological gloss: *maṇḍa* (cream, best part, highest point) and *la* (signpost or completion), therefore a point containing an essence. Denise P. Leidy and Robert A. F. Thurman, *Mandala: The Architecture of Enlightenment* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1997), 17.

⁶⁴ Giuseppe Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala: With Special Reference to the Modern Psychology of the Subconscious*, trans. Alan Houghton Brodrick (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2001 [1961]), 25.

⁶⁵ Although I developed the term spatial typology as a more abstract catch-all term for a number of related practices that I will describe, it was brought to my attention that it and a similar term, spatial taxonomy, are also used in geography, land-use planning and related fields. In that context spatial typology is defined as “... a general term that

Yonghegong as the “outer mandala”, and the contents of its halls as the “inner mandala”. My second mandala metaphor is inspired by the idea that the *tāntrika* conceives of him or herself as the center of three concentric dimensions of existence (physical, socio-political, and spiritual). I will adapt this model to organize the diverse array of symbols at Yonghegong into what I call the “three spheres.” The centrality of the emperor as universal ruler is the common theme of both metaphors, the point around which things are organized in the spatial typology, and the point to which all symbols ultimately refer in the three spheres.

Spatial Typology and the Qing Court

Spatial Typology at the State Level

Spatial typology as I am defining it is a concept of great antiquity in Asia. It is reflected even in what remains today the most common name for China in Chinese: *Zhongguo* 中國, the Central Kingdom, a designation that implies a spatial relationship between the central state (civilized) and its surrounding subordinate states (the more distant the more barbaric), a theory fully articulated by the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE).⁶⁶ In a more strategically-oriented model, early South Asian political theories, such as those articulated in the *Arthaśāstra* (fourth century BCE – second century CE), suggest that a state conceive of alternating enemy and ally

describes the result of a clustering process that is based on relevant spatial data.” Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Government of the Philippines, “CLUP GIS Guidebook: A Guide to Comprehensive Land Use Data Management, 2007,” last modified October 25, 2007, <<http://www.cookbook.hlurb.gov.ph/>>. I am using the term in reverse: rather than collecting data points and looking for spatial patterns, I am describing the grouping of things in a spatial relationship in response to a preexisting model.

⁶⁶ Yü Ying-shih, “Han Foreign Relations,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 1: The Ch'in and Han Empires 221 BC-AD 220*, 379-80, quoted in David L. Hall, and Roger T. Ames, “The Cosmological Setting of Chinese Gardens,” *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 175-86.

states in an ever widening circle around it, a model that was one of the earliest uses of the term mandala.⁶⁷

At the Qianlong court, although inter-state relations continued to follow the civilized core/uncivilized periphery model, the cultural geography of the Qing Empire itself was understood in less ethnocentric terms. In his study of the Qing expansion into Central Asia, James A. Millward provides a useful diagram of the Qianlong era view of the empire as a collection of independent, ethno-cultural areas, what Pamela Crossley refers to as ‘constituencies,’ in forms that, during the Qianlong period, were in fact being imagined, defined and articulated into being.⁶⁸ In this diagram, the “Qing Imperial House” is at the center and the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Muslim and Tibetan constituencies are arranged around it with a rough correspondence to their actual geographic “centers of gravity” (i.e. the Chinese area is to the south, the Mongol to the north, etc.). That the Chinese area is portrayed not as central but as just one of the equivalent constituencies constitutes a major contribution of the “New Qing Studies,” broadening what was once a more limited assumption of imperial Manchu sinicization to include the courts’ more ethnically inclusive vision of itself.

Spatial Typology at the City Level

Traditional Chinese ideals of city planning emphasize the centrality of the ruler in a city organized to reflect symmetry, order and harmony. A section of the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮, ca. 2nd century BCE) titled “Record of Trades” (*Kaogongji* 考工記), describes the ideal capital city as a grid of nine squares oriented to the cardinal directions, with the centermost square

⁶⁷ Tambiah, *Culture*, 253. See also Roger Boesche, “Kautilya’s ‘Arthaśāstra’ on War and Diplomacy in Ancient India,” *The Journal of Military History* 67, no.1 (Jan., 2003): 18.

⁶⁸ James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), Fig. 9, 201. On constituencies see Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1999), 44.

reserved for the ruler.⁶⁹ Some of the basic vocabulary of imperial symbolism is seen here: the ruler is at the center, and faces south like the immovable Pole Star in the heavens that he embodies on Earth. Further significant is the nine squares, another imperial symbol: as the highest single-digit *yang* number in *yin-yang* numerology, it became a number associated with the supreme *yang* represented by the emperor, a force also represented by the dragon.

With the establishment of Beijing as the Ming capital in the early fifteenth century, a city plan was created that was rooted in this traditional symbolism but added further hierarchical dimensions to it. In his study of Beijing's imperial spatial symbolism, Jianfei Zhu describes two kinds of spatial hierarchies at work. One is the hierarchy of nested enclosures, from outer to inner with the innermost spaces being the most inaccessible and therefore highest in the imperial order. The second is an axial hierarchy. The capital was pierced by the south-north imperial axial road that passes through nine gates from the outermost wall and culminates with the main ceremonial hall at the center of the Forbidden City, the Hall of Supreme Harmony (*Taihedian* 太和殿). This is a movement simultaneously inward and upward in the political hierarchy of space.⁷⁰ Buildings along this axis were also more highly ranked than those to the sides. Angela Zito, focusing on the ritual significance of the city plan, describes another kind of spatial hierarchy. The placement of the sites of the state cult, such as the Altars to Heaven (*Tiantan* 天壇, south), Earth (*Ditan* 地壇 north), the Sun (*Ritan* 日壇, east) and the Moon (*Yuetan* 月壇, west), reflect a directional hierarchy: south over north and east over west, a system derived from traditional Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行) directional symbolism.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Liu Xujie, "The Origins of Chinese Architecture," in *Chinese Architecture*, ed. Nancy S. Steinhardt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 24.

⁷⁰ Jianfei Zhu, *Chinese Spatial Strategies: Imperial Beijing, 1420-1911* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 49-50.

⁷¹ Angela Zito, *Of Body & Brush: Grand Sacrifice As Text/performance in Eighteenth-Century China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 144-47.

The symbolic significance of this city plan was added to in the Qing period, with spatial typology of a specifically Manchu character. Soon after the Qing occupation of Beijing in 1644, the capital was divided into four sections. (Fig. 65) The innermost and most exclusive was the Forbidden City itself. It was surrounded by the Imperial City, which included other areas exclusive to the central government and imperial family. It in turn was surrounded by the Inner City, designated for residences of the Qing elite warrior caste, the Banners (*qi* 旗; *Ma. gusa*). Yonghegong, for example, was in the residential district of the Bordered Yellow Banner, one of the three Banners under the direct control of the emperor.⁷² Arrangement of the Banner districts followed the traditional location of the Banners' tents when on campaigns, pitched in a protective cordon around the emperor's tent.⁷³

Finally, Qing Beijing included a separate walled section that extended south from the Inner City called the Outer City, the area to which civilian Han Chinese residents were forcibly relocated after the Qing conquest. The Outer City included the commercial districts of the city, as well as two important imperial ceremonial sites: the Altar to Heaven and Altar to Agriculture (*Xiannongtan* 先農壇) that flank the imperial axial road.

A final association of spatial symbolism with the plan of Beijing brings in Tibetan Buddhism. Lessing ascribes to oral tradition a model of the city that associates it with a mandala of Yamāntaka, a wrathful manifestation of Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom. This three-level mandala roughly corresponds to the three concentric areas of the Qing Inner City, with the highest/innermost level as the Forbidden City (centered on the Hall of Supreme Harmony, interpreted as the palace of Yamāntaka), the second level as the Imperial City, and the outermost

⁷² Naquin, *Peking*, 356. The other imperial banners were the Plain Yellow and the Plain White Banners.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

level as the Inner City (with the banner residential districts).⁷⁴ As we will see, both Yamāntaka and Mañjuśrī figure prominently in Qianlong era imperial symbolism.

Spatial Typology at the Site Level

In choosing and planning individual sites, spatial typology also has a long pedigree in China, finding its most complex expression in *fengshui* 風水, a traditional system of city/site planning and interior design.⁷⁵ In this system spaces are arranged and/or chosen to accord with the various flows of cosmic vital energy in the environment, and improper adaptation to these forces is blamed for the downfall of the site's owners/residents. Due to this belief, *fengshui* principles are fundamental to the design of imperial sites, particularly of palaces and tombs. A dramatic example is found at the Forbidden City. Although Beijing was a good choice as a capital for various practical and strategic reasons, its relative flatness created concern that the central palace would have poor *fengshui*, since a mountain to the rear and a river to the front was considered essential. Therefore, during the site's original construction in the Ming dynasty the artificial mountain north of the palace complex known today as "Prospect Hill" (*Jingshan* 景山) was created with earth from the palace moats, and a waterway was created to run in front of the Gate of Supreme Harmony.⁷⁶ We will see the influence of *fengshui* on Yonghegong in relation to the construction of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness in 1750.

Aside from the influence of *fengshui* on Qing imperial sites, the Qing court added new kinds of spatial symbolism. Although the Great Wall to the north and the city walls of the

⁷⁴ Ferdinand D. Lessing, "The Topographical Identification of Peking with Yamāntaka," in *Ritual and Symbol: Collected Essays on Lamaism and Chinese Symbolism*, Asian Folklore and Social Life, Monograph 91, by Ferdinand Lessing (Taipei: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 89-90.

⁷⁵ Amid the voluminous popular works on the subject, Bruun provides an academic overview of the history and traditions of *fengshui*. Ole Bruun, *An Introduction to Feng Shui* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁷⁶ Yu Zhuoyun, et al., *Palaces of the Forbidden City* (New York: Viking Press, 1984) 28.

capital provided physical protection, and metaphysical protection came from the Forbidden City's positive *fengshui*, the Qing court actually spent much of its time outside of these protective barriers in various imperial palace-gardens and hunting grounds. Their placement outside the walls symbolized in part the court's confidence in its military prowess and in the stability that the Qing had created, requiring residence in the "Great Within" of the Forbidden City only at ritually significant times. The open spaces and renowned architectural wonders of these sites were often noted by members of the court as being much preferred to the famously dark, cold and confining spaces of the Forbidden City.⁷⁷ In fact, for much of the "High Qing" period of the Kangxi (1661-1722) and Qianlong reigns, but less frequently during the Yongzheng reign, the court was often on the move, its peripatetic nature a symbol and a demonstration of its dynamism.

At two of these sites, the formerly immense palace-gardens of Yuanmingyuan (圓明園, "Garden of Perfect Brightness") just outside the walls of the Qing capital (although today in ruins), and at Bishushanzhuang (避暑山莊, "Mountain Villa for Avoiding the Heat of Summer") the imperial summer retreat at Chengde, north of the Great Wall, we find a specifically Qianlong-era architectural manifestation of spatial typology. Both sites are typically described as microcosms in the classic sense of miniature models of the empire, and both conveyed the idea of imperial universalism through the functions and symbols of the many structures and spaces there.

Yuanmingyuan began as a gift from the Kangxi emperor to his son and later successor, the Yongzheng emperor, who expanded the garden, and in 1726 made it his primary residence

⁷⁷ Barmé, *Forbidden City*, xiii.

and workplace.⁷⁸ However, it was his son and successor, the Qianlong emperor, who made the most dramatic expansion of the site. During his reign the site reached its most impressive form, expanding to the west of the original Yuanmingyuan with the Garden of Eternal Spring (*Changchunyuan* 長春園) and later to the south with the Garden of Variegated Spring (*Qichunyuan* 綺春園). The three gardens were and are typically referred to as a whole as Yuanmingyuan. By the time of its final expansion, Yuanmingyuan covered an area of roughly 865 acres, a residential garden slightly larger than Central Park in Manhattan.

At the garden's entrance, Yuanmingyuan included a formal palace section, where official government affairs were conducted. Behind this was the residential section, built on nine artificial islands symbolic of the world's nine continents described in Chinese classic texts. The rest of the garden, the majority, was taken up with more diverse attractions. They included Buddhist and Daoist temples and shrines to the imperial ancestors, fanciful recreations of the islands of the Daoist immortals, small working rice fields tended by eunuchs dressed as farmers, and an entertainment district that included shops for members of the court to play at haggling with eunuchs dressed as merchants. The site also included a small section with European-style structures designed for the emperor by court Jesuits, ironically the best known part of the site today because the ruins of the brick and masonry structures were the only parts of the site to survive the sacking and burning by European troops in 1860 and 1900.

Bishushanzhuang, also begun under the Kangxi emperor, was a similarly "macro" microcosm, but one that encompassed non-Chinese sections of the empire. It included Chinese style palaces and residential gardens to the south, some of which were based on famous gardens of the cultural heartland of the Chinese literati, the Jiangnan 江南 region of southern China. The

⁷⁸ For the 1726 date, see Wong, *Paradise*, 74.

site then fanned out to the north with a large, open plain for equestrian sports and a Mongol-style encampment, beyond which was a vast, forested hunting ground to the north and west. East of the plain was a Buddhist temple, *Yongyousi* 永佑寺 (“Monastery of Eternal Protection”) with a pagoda modeled on two famous pagodas in the south.⁷⁹ All was bordered by a reduced-scale version of the Great Wall. Outside this wall was a series of primarily Tibetan Buddhist temples in the hills to the north and east.

Spatial Typology and Other Systems of Organization at the Qianlong Court

In his study of Bishushanzhuang, Cary Y. Liu describes the site as a “symbolic representation of empire established as a well-ordered and collected whole, with the emperor at the center and subordinate areas of the empire emanating around him...”⁸⁰ He goes on to note that the site “...can be seen as an ‘embodied image’ of the larger abstractions of both a spiritual topography and political landscape.”⁸¹ This spiritual topography included not only the aforementioned Buddhist sites, but also Daoist associations added to the site by the Qianlong emperor in his writings about the retreat.⁸²

⁷⁹ These pagodas are Liuheta 六和塔 in Hangzhou and the Baoensi 報恩寺 pagoda in Nanjing. Cary Y. Liu, “Archive of Power: The Qing Dynasty Imperial Garden-Palace at Rehe,” *Meishushi yanjiu jikan* 美術史研究集刊 [“Journal of Art Historical Research”] 28 (2010): 51-2. The name of the monastery is similar to that of the Hall of Eternal Protection (*Yongyoudian* 永佑殿) in Yonghegong, devoted to the Yongzheng emperor. The stele at Yongyousi suggests that it was similarly devoted to the Kangxi emperor. Peter Zarrow, “The Imperial Word in Stone,” in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, ed. James A. Millward (London: Routledge, 2004), 152-3.

⁸⁰ Liu, “Archive,” 50-51.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁸² These included Daoist references in his collected poems on the site, as well as in his well-known series of poems on designated scenic spots at Bishushanzhuang. The Kangxi emperor had identified thirty-six views, and rhapsodized about them, to which the Qianlong emperor added another thirty-six. The number chosen was not only out of filial deference to his grandfather, but also had Daoist numerological significance, related to the thirty-six cave-heavens (*dongtian* 洞天) and (with the added thirty-six) seventy-two blessed-lands (*fudi* 福地) of Daoist lore. *Ibid.*, 47.

Liu's broader point, however, is not simply that the Bishushanzhuang can be understood as a microcosm, but that the site is an example of a more widespread imperial organizational process he terms "archiving." He defines the term as "naming and categorizing relationships between people, places and things [as] a means to map and occupy empire."⁸³ He provides etymological links between archive and the Greek terms *archē* (rule, regulation, government) and *archon* (ruler), paralleling them with the Chinese term *dian* 典 (rules; to regulate) used in "archived books and documents" (*dianji* 典籍) and "governing rules and regulations" (*dianzhi* 典制; *dianzhang* 典章).⁸⁴ The connections between archiving and rule, he asserts, are as follows: "Through classification in archives, boundaries are defined and hierarchic relationships can be established between categories."⁸⁵ Liu suggests that similar hierarchical classification is found in Qing literary archives and "architectural archives" such as Bishushanzhuang or Yuanmingyuan.⁸⁶

As an example of a literary archive, Liu's cites the *Sikuquanshu* 四庫全書 ("Complete Library of the Four Treasuries"), the enormous Qianlong-era literary collection that compiled a corpus of Chinese literature probably best understood as a "Confucian Canon," parallel to the Daoist and Buddhist Canons, but focused on text most relevant to rulership.⁸⁷ Liu points to an organizational hierarchy conveyed by the arrangement of the collection's volumes in their specially built halls, with the emperor's seat at the center and "...each classification of books ... stored at a distance from the emperor corresponding to its relative importance."⁸⁸ In fact, this

⁸³ Ibid., 44.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 53. The similarity between the English terms architecture and archive is accidental. Architecture derives from the Latin term *arcus* (bow, arc, arch).

⁸⁷ Ibid., 108. For details of the project, see R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

⁸⁸ Liu, "Archive," 53.

classification system is not unique to the Qing period, but is implicit in earlier literary collections known as *leishu* 類書 (“categorized works”), in which the topics are arranged in relation to their relevance to imperial rule, if not to the emperor himself.⁸⁹

Furthermore, in another study by Liu of one of the library buildings constructed to house the *Siku Quanshu* volumes, he also notes that the choice of four groupings of treasuries (rather than the seven found in other collections) referenced in part the correlations of Four Directions, Four Deities, Four Seasons, Four Colors, Four Virtues, etc. that were standard parts of the Neo-Confucian intellectual milieu in which the Qianlong emperor was educated.⁹⁰ Although Liu goes on to discuss the correlations of four in relation to cyclical progression among other associations, I want to emphasize what I see as the fundamental four, the Four Directions, which imply a center. That center in an imperial context, like the implied center of earlier *leishu*, was the emperor.

Moreover, for Liu, Qing archival practices

“... defined *for the public* [emphasis mine] an order for the empire, but also laid claim to the physical, religious, ethnic, and epistemological territories of their empire. Like the act of staking claim to territory with a flag, the act of archiving—by naming and ordering—laid claim to the far reaches of the empire.”

I agree with Liu’s characterization of *what* was done in archiving, but not who it was for. Vast literary compilations like the *Siku Quanshu*, and of course sites like Yuanmingyuan and Bishushanzhuang, were not really intended for the public, but for the emperor. The locations of the seven copies of the *Siku Quanshu* is telling: four in imperial sites (the Forbidden City,

⁸⁹ Hall and Ames, “Cosmological,” 176. Liu differentiates *leishu* from *congshu* 叢書 (“collected works”), and points out that the *Siku Quanshu* project was an example of the latter. This *congshu* format allowed for reproduction of entire original works, and therefore the possibility for the editing and censorship that became the great controversy of the *Siku Quanshu* project. Liu, “Wen-Yüan-Ko,” 46-7.

⁹⁰ Liu, “Wen-Yüan-Ko,” 109; 125-29. The choice of the four classifications was also in accord with earlier imperial systems, and thus may have been chosen for its legitimating character. Ibid., 111-12. Guy emphasizes the fact that the four-classifications scheme harkens back to Tang and Song models, explicitly rejecting the “ignominies” of the Ming. Guy, “Emperor’s,” 78.

Yuanmingyuan, Bishushanzhuang, and the former Qing capital at Shenyang) and the other three in the *Jiangnan* literati heartland (Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, and Hangzhou), where their accessibility was limited and their function, according to Alexander Woodside, "... had more the nature of localized textual showcases of empire."⁹¹

Liu also suggests that parallels may exist between Qing archiving and nineteenth-century European colonialist techniques of rule that also needed to order vast collections of information, although he is careful to say that his study is "...not intending a comparison between eighteenth-century China and nineteenth-century Europe, or between East and West."⁹² He describes the parallels as follows:

Whereas early modern mapping involved new visual and empirical techniques to order geography as ethnic, political, or sacred terrain, it may be argued that archiving was a parallel phenomenon, which relied instead on traditional intellectual frameworks and classificatory structures to order knowledge in new ways as a means to govern empire.⁹³

I would suggest that the most important of the "traditional intellectual frameworks and classificatory structures" that differentiates Qing and European imperialism in this context was the central role of the emperor. European empires transformed their subject places and peoples into words and numbers to be accessed by a vast bureaucracy, whereas the examples of Qing archives discussed by Liu (of texts or sites) were intended to provide that access for the emperor alone, a function shared by other Qianlong era collections, whether of art, literature or the deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon to be discussed in Chapter Seven.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Alexander Woodside, "The Chien-lung Reign," in *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 9, Part 1: the Ch'ing Empire to 1800*, eds. John K. Fairbank, and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 284.

⁹² Liu, "Archive," 59.

⁹³ Ibid. On nineteenth-century British imperial archival projects Liu references Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (New York: Verso, 1993). My discussion is also informed by Cohn's work on the relationship of archiving to other tools of imperialism. Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 3-11.

⁹⁴ Berger, citing Wang Jiapeng, notes the private nature of the Qianlong period Tibetan Buddhist sculptural pantheons. Berger, *Empire*, 110.

Liu's study of Qing imperial sites as archives is impressive and wide-ranging, and I have addressed only a small part of his thesis here. Liu himself admits that his interpretation is not comprehensive, and suggests that these archives, along with the Qianlong-era catalogues of the imperial art collection and other works, require further investigation that "...may reveal underlying symbolic frameworks intended to order the Qing world into archival structures."⁹⁵ One such underlying framework is brought to light by Patricia Berger's examination of the cataloguing of the emperor's vast art collection in a system that she describes as "architectural mnemonics."⁹⁶ This term refers to the idiosyncratic structure of the catalogues, organized according to where the works of art were physically stored in the Forbidden City. Berger associates this organizational system with the emperor's Buddhist practice involving mandalas.

The building by building account of the collection he ordered (notably dropped in the catalog's third edition produced after his death) recalls the mnemonic, architectural system of the mandala, which enables the meditator to recall an otherwise incomprehensible number of deities in detail by placing them neatly within its palace structure.⁹⁷

As Berger notes, this idea of the mandala as a mnemonic was familiar to the Qianlong emperor, who used mandalas in his daily Buddhist practice; furthermore, the emperor was aware of another form of architectural mnemonics from the memory palace technique used by the Jesuits in his service.⁹⁸ However, the memory palace was a mnemonic tool divorced from ideology, whereas the mandala placed things in a hierarchical relationship of center to periphery. This hierarchy is clear in the choice of the Palace of Heavenly Purity (*Qianqinggong* 乾清宫) as

⁹⁵ Liu, "Archives," 54.

⁹⁶ Berger, *Empire*, 81.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* For the specifics of the practice, see Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984) 1-4. See also Berger, *Empire*, 213, n. 37 for more sources on mnemonic practice. The memory palace is also known as the "method of loci" mnemonic system.

the storehouse for the most valued works in the collection.⁹⁹ The palace was one of the main axial halls of the site and one of the most important in the Forbidden City, the inner court equivalent of the Hall of Supreme Harmony. Similarly, works at the height of the imperial art hierarchy stored in the palace comes first in the catalogues, namely calligraphy by the emperors, designated in a unit (*juan* 卷, “fascicle”) that Berger suggests may be related to storage cabinets. Although specific storage locations within the hall are unknown, I suspect that such cabinets, like those for the *Siku Quanshu*, were arranged in relation to the emperor’s throne at the center.¹⁰⁰

I contend that all of these conceptual frameworks, state, city and site level spatial ordering, Liu’s archiving, Berger’s architectural mnemonics, and even Millward’s Qing cultural geography, can be understood as aspects of what I am calling spatial typology.¹⁰¹ Unlike the term archiving, it emphasizes the central importance of placement in Qing organizational schema, and not simply the translation of the empire into text and figures. Architectural mnemonics, even if only intended as a description of the imperial art catalogue, is closer to what I am suggesting; however, spatial typology accounts for the spatial classification of things outside of a specifically architectural context, and for functions other than mnemonics. By creating a term that refers to a more general but perhaps more fundamental structure in Qianlong-era organizational models, I hope to encourage a greater awareness of underlying themes and interwoven connections in the symbolic world of Qing imperial sites. In the next sections I will

⁹⁹ Berger, *Empire*, 78-81. For a series of excellent charts on the specific organization of the catalogues and in which halls the works were stored, see Yen-wen Cheng, “Tradition and Transformation: Cataloguing Chinese Art in the Middle and Late Imperial Eras” (Publicly accessible Penn Dissertations. Paper 98, 2010) 229-378. <<http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/98>>

¹⁰⁰ Berger, in noting the “Buddhist flavor” of the emperor’s organizational schemes also points to a linear mode, one she connects with the repetition of Buddhist prayers known as *nianfo* 念佛 (“recalling the Buddha”). This is a practice typically done using rosary beads, and Berger suggests that both the very name of the emperor’s catalogue of religious art, *Bidian zhulin* 秘殿珠林 (“The Beaded Grove of the Secret Hall”) and the mantra-like repetition of the sacred works in sequence recalled this practice. Interestingly, the first of the three *Bidian zhulin* catalogues was completed in 1744, the inaugural year of Yonghegong as a monastery. Berger, *Empire*, 81-2.

¹⁰¹ Angela Zito has discussed another kind of spatial typology centered on the Qing emperor in relation to Qing court ritual, what she refers to as an “encompassed hierarchy.” See Zito, *Of Body*, 29-30.

apply spatial typology to Yonghegong, using the idea of hierarchy and symbolic placement to provide an interpretive model for the site.

Outer and Inner Mandalas at Yonghegong

At Yonghegong, as at many religious sites, a metaphorical journey is provided from an exterior profane world into sacred space, a physical and metaphysical movement in concert. To imagine and interpret a politically and spiritually informed journey through Yonghegong, I have divided the site into what I will call “outer” and “inner” mandalas, referring to two separate but interconnected spaces.¹⁰² The outer mandala is the exterior aspect of the site, including the site plan, buildings and other structures. The inner mandala is the multidimensional symbolic world of the Buddhist sculptures, inscriptions, and other objects within the halls. As I will also demonstrate, the symbolic value of the sculptural icons is not limited to iconography, but extends to style, artists and the origins of works presented as gifts to the Qianlong court.

Yonghegong is a complicated site, and my model is not a perfect tool. The messages of outer and inner mandalas are not rigidly and consistently separate, and overlap at some points. Despite this, and often for clarity and simplicity of presentation, I will address outer and inner together for some overlapping parts of the site (e.g. the imperial periphery) at others separately (e.g. the Tuṣita Heaven section). Although there are separate messages to be found in the two mandalas, both conclude with the same underlying theme of imperial universalism. Finally, as noted in the introduction, my outer and inner mandalas take 1792 as an end point of development

¹⁰² I am using these terms differently than they are sometimes used in Tibetan Buddhism, where “inner mandala” and “outer mandala” refer to ritual offerings of different types. Alexander Berzin, “The Meaning and Use of a Mandala,” Berzin Archives, 2003, last modified August 24, 2012. <http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/advanced/tantra/level1_getting_started/meaning_use_mandala.html#nc17a229a2d7b92e71>

for the Qianlong-era symbolic program, but I will note some twentieth-century additions to the site that will contribute to a richer understanding of the site's later history.

The Outer Mandala

The outer mandala begins with what I call the “imperial periphery,” two large sections of Yonghegong formerly outside the walls of the ritual core. The Eastern Academy, a Chinese “scholar’s garden” to the east, represents the world of the Chinese literati; and the Temple to Guandi to the west represents the military world. This arrangement recalls formal court audiences in which the emperor stood above and at the front, facing south (“the imperial position”), while officials of the civilian branch of government stood to his left (the east) and those of the military branch stood to his right (the west), often abbreviated in Chinese as *wenzuo wuyou* 文左武右 (“civilian left, military right”).¹⁰³

Moving inward from the imperial periphery to the ritual core, we come to an area replete with a synthesis of imperial and Buddhist symbolism. I suggest an interpretation that, like the mandalas and the three spheres, is rooted in eighteenth-century Qing court ideas, but is more properly understood as a heuristic device that provides a working, comprehensive interpretive model. Moving physically forward and upward from courtyard to courtyard along the axis of the ritual core is also ascension through symbolic space and time, from the ancient garden-monasteries of a mythic Indian past, to the Chinese court palaces and lofty Tibetan monasteries of the eighteenth-century present, and finally to the celestial realm of Maitreya, the Buddha of

¹⁰³ In the Qing period, *wen* and *wu* are also referenced in the names of two important temple types. The major temple to Guandi in each city was often called *Wumiao* 武廟 (Military Temple, or Temple to Military Culture), modeled on the Confucian temples known as *Wenmiao* 文廟 (Civil Temple, or Temple to Civil Culture). Prasenjit Duara, “Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (Nov., 1988): 785.

the Future.¹⁰⁴ This progression is reflected in five physical divisions along the central axis that I designate as follows: the prefatory courtyard (Courtyard I¹⁰⁵), the garden section (Courtyard II and flanking monastic residences), the palace section (Courtyards III, IV and V), the plateau section (Courtyard VI) and finally the Tuṣita Heaven section (Courtyards VII and VIII).

Although I have provided an overview of the site in the introduction, let me briefly revisit the site to describe these divisions more clearly before detailing each section in later chapters.

The prefatory courtyard introduces the major symbolic themes of the site through the pailou inscriptions. Next is the garden section, beginning with the tree-lined imperial carriageway and extending to include the monastic residences east and west of that courtyard. As a garden-like space connected to monastic residences, it suggests the original garden monasteries of ancient India. At the end of the long, serene path of the garden section lies the Gate of Luminous Peace and the entrance to the palace section.

The palace section is so designated for a number of reasons, the first being that it retains the basic layout and buildings that the site had when it was an actual palace, the mansion of Prince Yong. Like other Qing palaces it unfolds as a series of courtyards enclosed by timber-framed buildings, each courtyard having a major hall at the north side that creates a central axis for the site. These axial halls are easily identified by their imperial yellow roof tiles. The palace section includes the Gate of Harmony and Peace, the Palace of Harmony and Peace, and the Hall

¹⁰⁴ Niu notes the three physical divisions of the site (my Garden, Palace, and a combination of Plateau and Tuṣita Heaven sections), and suggests that they may represent the Three Realms (S. *Triloka*) in Buddhist cosmology, but the writer doesn't pursue this, and "leaves it up to the experts to correct this assumption," continuing with the standard courtyard model for a site overview. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 225. Meyer makes a similar point about Han Buddhist temples in general, extending the triadic symbolism to the *trikaya*, among other trios. Jeffrey F. Meyer, "Chinese Buddhist Monastic Temples as Cosmograms," in *Sacred Architecture in the Traditions of India, China, Judaism and Islam*, ed. Emily Lyle (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 71-92. Although I basically agree with the physical divisions described in YHG, I don't see evidence for that interpretation in a literal sense in the specific iconographic program at Yonghegong, particularly since the northernmost section clearly represents the Tuṣita Heaven, still part of the "Desire Realm," (S. *Kāmaloka*, *Kāmadhātu*) the lowest level of the Three Realms. However, assuming it is a standard concept in Han Buddhist temple plans, it has relevance.

¹⁰⁵ Courtyards designated with Roman numerals are the courtyard divisions from the Melchers plan.

of Eternal Protection, along with important subsidiary buildings like the Bell and Drum Towers, the various stele pavilions and the Four Study Halls devoted to the monastic curriculum. I will further argue that the layout of the palace section also reflects a particular architectural plan found elsewhere only at the Forbidden City, and the Palace of Harmony and Peace in this plan can be understood as equivalent to the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the ceremonial center of the palace.

Climbing up from the palace section and into the plateau section, we find ourselves in a large, open courtyard in front of the striking, Tibetan-inspired vision of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel with subsidiary buildings to the east and west. (Fig. 55) This is most singularly Tibetan style building at the site in both architectural form and function. This hall is flanked by the Ordination Platform Tower (*Jietailou* 戒臺樓) on the west and the Panchen Tower (*Banchanlou* 班禪樓) on the east, both constructed for the ill-fated 1780 visit of the Panchen Lama to the Qianlong court. (Figs. 57-8) The plateau section's physical height, open space and associations with Tibet in the style and function of the buildings inspire the designation after the Tibetan Plateau, the elevated geographic region that includes the traditionally Tibetan areas of today's PRC, Qinghai Province and the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Curiously, certain architectural features of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel make the building similar in rank to the Palace of Harmony and Peace, and the fact that it is shaped like the central palace in a mandala suggest that it may actually have been the ceremonial center of Yonghegong.

Moving beyond the palace and plateau sections and their associations with the vast expanse of the Qing empire of the present, we are welcomed into the fifth and final area of the site, the Tusita Heaven section. Whereas the large open space of the plateau section was made more dramatic by the tightly compacted spaces preceding it, the dramatic height of the Pavilion

of Infinite Happiness is magnified by the narrow courtyard that it towers over. This section represents the Tuṣita Heaven, the heavenly realm in which Maitreya, in bodhisattva form, prepares for rebirth into our world. The symbolic associations of this section are unequivocal and reinforced by the architecture, the inscriptions inside and outside of the pavilion, and most dramatically by the eighteen-meter tall statue of Maitreya Bodhisattva that is only visible after entering the building. This magnificent building and the statue it enshrines mark the culmination of the journey through both the outer and inner mandalas.

The Inner Mandala

In the outer mandala the Tibetan or even Buddhist character of Yonghegong is not immediately apparent to the visitor. Moving from the street outside through the prefatory courtyard, garden and palace sections, one might assume that the site has not been much altered from its previous appearance when it was an imperial prince's mansion. It is only after passing into the plateau section that recognizably Tibetan architectural elements appear in the plan and roof design of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. However, the interiors of these halls present a different world, the inner mandala, in which the Tibetan character of the site is more prominent. Whereas the outer mandala suggests movement through space and time, from garden to Tuṣita Heaven, from ancient India to a future utopia, the vast array of sculptures that make up the inner mandala suggests a different kind of movement, this time through the multifaceted and hierarchical pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism. A brief overview of the main icons that make up the inner mandala was provided in the introduction, and the sculptures and pantheon itself will be discussed in later chapters. Let me briefly discuss the inner mandala here more generally as it relates to spatial typology.

The arrangement of the inner mandala involves a multitude of deities that extend out in an axial hierarchy much like the imperial city and site plans noted in connection with the outer mandala. In the more familiar painted mandalas of Tibetan Buddhism that are composed of a square within a circle (Fig. 66), the deities are arranged in a radiating hierarchy wherein the deities in the square, central section, understood to represent the palace of the central deity, are more highly ranked than those in the circular surrounding grounds. In the long, rectangular Yonghegong site the inner mandala uses a different organizing framework, one that, like so many aspects of Yonghegong, combines features from both Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism.

Although Yonghegong is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery, as discussed in the introduction Yonghegong uses the courtyard compound plan that was standard to Chinese palaces and religious sites, a plan adopted for the majority of Qing court-sponsored Tibetan Buddhist temples. The progression inward and upward in a Chinese Buddhist temple suggests progress in a linear fashion through the hierarchy of deities along the axis of the site. Subsidiary deities are arranged in halls to either side of this axis. Tibetan temples tend to be asymmetrical in plan, in part due to the geographic constraints of being built in mountainous areas, and although they enshrine hierarchical groupings of deities, they are not as overtly linear in structure as Chinese temples.¹⁰⁶ However, there is a Tibetan Buddhist context in which a linear, hierarchical structure similar to the Chinese temple plan exists. In most Tibetan thangkas, particularly in a vertical format, a vertical hierarchy is implicit: lower-ranked deities (often dharma protectors) appear at the bottom of the painting and higher ranked deities and other figures appear at the top.

A particularly complex form of this vertical hierarchy is seen in paintings of a type referred to as a “Refuge Field” or “Field of Accumulation (of merit)” (T. *tshogs zhing*), often

¹⁰⁶ Sun Dazhang, “The Qing Dynasty,” in *Chinese Architecture*, edited by Nancy S. Steinhardt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 318.

popularly referred to as a “Refuge Tree.”¹⁰⁷ (Fig. 67) The Refuge Field is a representation of lineage, and as such is organized in a roughly linear fashion. It is also hierarchical, with the most important deities and teachers in the lineage placed on the central axis, subsidiary figures placed at the sides, and protectors at the bottom. The placement of protectors at the bottom indicates that there is an implicit space above/behind them that they are guarding the “entrance” to, and landscape elements in the background support this perception of the Refuge Field as a representation of a sacred space like the more familiar circle/square palace mandala. Refuge Field paintings seem to have been late developments in Tibetan art, dated by scholars of Tibetan art to examples from the Gelug order made in the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁸ If that is the case, then some of the earliest dated examples of Refuge Field paintings may have been produced by the Qianlong court. These are the well-known portraits that I will refer to as *The Qianlong Emperor as Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*, produced after the emperor began his Tibetan Buddhist practice in earnest in the 1750s.¹⁰⁹ (Fig. 68) These paintings reflect the emperor’s efforts to assert his legitimacy as enlightened Buddhist ruler, and to project a message of universal dominion by the sheer comprehensiveness of the pantheons represented as included in his

¹⁰⁷ Huntington notes that the term “Refuge Tree” is a common misunderstanding of this kind of image, and points to the potential confusion of the term *shing* (tree) with *zhing* (field), and to the fact that the assembly is arranged on a very tree-like form rising on a large trunk out of a pond. This “tree” is actually a very large lotus with countless leaves and blossoms. He further notes that in “...practice and popular understanding” the ‘tree’ is understood to be the “wish-granting tree” (*S. kalpa vriksha*) used in Tibetan iconography. John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art* (Chicago: Serindia Publications; Columbus: Columbus Museum of Art, 2003), 168.

¹⁰⁸ Marilyn M. Rhie, Robert A. F. Thurman, and John B. Taylor, *Wisdom and Compassion: the Sacred Art of Tibet* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1991), 373. See also Jeff Watt, “Refuge Field Main Page,” Himalayan Art, last updated March 9, 2010, <<http://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=157>>

¹⁰⁹ Berger, *Empire*, 2. These portraits are covered most comprehensively in Michael Henss, “The Bodhisattva Emperor: Tibeto-Chinese Portraits of Sacred and Secular Rule in the Qing Dynasty, Part 1,” *Orientalism* 47, no. 3 (2001): 2-16; Part 2, *Orientalism* 47, no. 5 (2001): 71-83. The earliest of these paintings may date to the early 1760s. Ibid., 7. For a detailed reproduction and iconographic chart of one of the ten known portraits (now in the Freer Gallery collection), see Christopher Bruckner, ed., *Chinese Imperial Patronage: Treasures from Temples and Palaces* (London: Christopher Bruckner Asian Art Gallery, 1998) 8-22. See also Patricia Berger, “Lineages of Form: Buddhist Portraiture in the Manchu Court,” *Tibet Journal* 28, no.1&2 (Spring & Summer 2003): 109-146. The seminal article on the subject is David M. Farquhar, “Emperor As Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch’ing Empire,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 5-34.

lineage. As I will discuss in a later chapter, the inner mandala at Yonghegong, while not a Refuge Field, may share with the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portraits both the apparent comprehensiveness of the pantheon represented as well as the central importance of the emperor in it, a centrality shared by my other application of spatial typology to the symbolic program at Yonghegong, the three spheres.

The Three Spheres

The model of outer and inner mandalas introduced above organizes the physical spaces and material culture at Yonghegong into hierarchical arrangements that favor the center and the axis. Layered onto this centralized, linear model are three broad iconographic realms referenced by the art and architecture: the imperial presence at the site, the emperor's politico-spiritual legitimacy, and his role in a set of Tibetan Buddhist millennial beliefs. Often, these are referenced simultaneously in a single work. Once again, spatial typology in general and the mandala in particular provide a conceptual model. In order to introduce these symbols in a systematic way that can then be referenced in my survey of the site, I have adapted a version of the mandala used in a Tibetan Buddhist system called the *Ākrasamvara Tantra*.

The mandala abstracts a version of the world of the tantric practitioner into a 'map' to be used for one focused purpose, in the way a subway map can be used effectively for getting from one point to another, but not for example to measure the specific distances between subway stops. As an abstract diagram, the mandala provides an architecture for the mental organization and manipulation of numerous concepts, as noted previously. However, to the tantric practitioner, a mandala is not simply a mnemonic device, but also represents a real, structured relationship among various aspects of the phenomenal realm. As such, mandalas are examples of

“correlative cosmologies,” or models of the universe that involve associating things together according to a revealed/determined system of interrelationships. Correlative cosmologies include the systems of *Yijing*, Yin and Yang and the Five Phases in China, or in the West the ancient Greek system of the Four Elements, later used in Western alchemy, as well as more familiar systems such as tarot or astrology. A. C. Graham describes a correlative cosmology as a proto-scientific model “... in which to explain and infer is to locate within the pattern,” in contrast to a scientific, causal model.¹¹⁰

It could be argued that this model of a structured cosmos is simply psychologically valuable for the practitioner as a means of imposing order onto a perceived chaos, or of organizing an overwhelming empire of information. It is that, but the correlative cosmology of the mandala is not just a description of the world of external or even internal phenomena. The mandala is understood as a tool used to lead the practitioner to deeper spiritual truths. In her definition of mandala, Denise Patrick Leidy broadens the definition of mandala to include the correlation of both macrocosm (universe) and microcosm (practitioner), with specific reference to its use in tantric practice:

Mandalas are often described as cosmoplans in both the external sense, as diagrams of the cosmos; and in the internal sense, as guides to the psycho-physical practices of an adherent. Fundamentally, however, mandalas represent manifestations of a specific divinity *in* the cosmos and *as* the cosmos. As such, they are seen as sacred places which, by their very presence in the world, remind a viewer of the immanence of sanctity in the universe and its potential in himself. They thereby assist his progress toward enlightenment.¹¹¹

The mandala, then, is a tool used to reveal to the practitioner that the inner and outer realms are only perceived to be separate, that the absolute ground of being (nirvana, emptiness) and the relative world of phenomena (samsara, form) are not two. However, the true realization

¹¹⁰ A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (Chicago: Open Court, 1989), 320.

¹¹¹ Leidy and Thurman, *Mandala*, 17.

of this seemingly simple nondual reality is understood to be so difficult, and the conscious mind and ego such challenging adversaries, that countless methods have proliferated to reveal it, and numerous traditions of tantric practice exist involving the mandalas of specific deities. The *Ākṛasamvara Tantra* (C. *Shangle jingang* 上樂金剛, also *Shengle jingang* 勝樂金剛; T. *'khor-lo-bde-mchog*) is one such practice.

The Qianlong emperor was first formally introduced to tantric practice involving a mandala in 1745, when Rölpe Dorjé initiated him into the *Ākṛasamvara Tantra*.¹¹² Although he later studied other tantric systems as well, the *Ākṛasamvara Tantra* continued to be important to the emperor throughout his life, and this is reflected in the archival and physical records of the period. Prominent visual evidence of the emperor's esteem for this tradition is found on the highest floor of the Pavilion of Raining Flowers (*Yuhuage* 雨花閣 1750), his private chapel for personal practice in the Forbidden City. There, a sculpture of the central deity of the *Ākṛasamvara Tantra*, Śrī Heruka or Śamvara (*Shangle* 上樂, T. *bde-mchog*, "Supreme Bliss"), is enshrined as one of the three deities of the Supreme *Yogatantra* (with Guhyasamāja and Vajrabhairava), which the emperor practiced.¹¹³ More publically and dramatically, a large sculpture of Śamvara is the main, central icon at Pulesi (普樂寺, "Monastery of Universal Happiness," 1767) at the Qing Imperial Summer Villa at Chengde. The large statue is enshrined in a large-scale, architectural Indo-Tibetan mandala palace that is itself enclosed in a spectacular, round timber-frame hall reminiscent of the renowned Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests at the Altar of Heaven complex in Beijing. The hall at Pulesi, called the Pavilion of the Light of Dawn

¹¹² Wang, "Tibetan Buddhism," 293.

¹¹³ Berger, *Empire*, 100. David Gray translates the term *Ākṛasamvara* as "Binding of the Wheels," noting that it is translated into Tibetan as *bde-mchog* ("great bliss"), and suggesting that the Chinese *shangle* is based on the Tibetan. David B. Gray, *The Ākṛasamvara Tantra: The Discourse of Śrī Heruka (śrīherukābhīdhāna)* (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University, 2007), 3-4, n. 4. On the differences between Śamvara and Samvara, see *Ibid.*, 37-8.

(*Xuguangge* 旭光閣), is mounted on a massive masonry foundation that is also modeled on a mandala. Berger notes that Śaṃvara figured in all of Rölpe Dorjé's projects, and that the Qianlong emperor continued to practice the *Ākṛasamvara Tantra* throughout his life.¹¹⁴

David Gray's analysis of the *Ākṛasamvara Tantra* identifies the mandala as an *indexical symbol*, a term used by Stanley Tambiah to describe something that is "capable of shifting between multiple levels of referentiality."¹¹⁵ Gray interprets the *Ākṛasamvara* mandala as having three of these levels: the microcosm of the individual practitioner's body (visualized as the deity), the macrocosm of the universe, and to these he adds the *mesocosm* of the "social world as lived by Buddhist communities."¹¹⁶ In terms of spatial typology, these levels of reality extend outward from the individual practitioner. Imagining oneself as the center of the universe in Buddhist practice is not intended to promote hierarchical or even narcissistic views, but encourages understanding of the self as being determined by these interconnected levels and therefore not separate and independent. Whether or not the Qianlong emperor, as ruler of the largest, wealthiest and most powerful empire of the day, fully absorbed this message of selflessness is impossible to determine. Ultimately, the centrality of the emperor in this model may have simply reinforced the ideology of imperial universalism.

¹¹⁴ Berger, *Empire*, 101.

¹¹⁵ David B. Gray, "Mandala of the Self: Embodiment, Practice, and Identity Construction in the *Ākṛasamvara* Tradition," *The Journal of Religious History* 30, no.3 (October 2006): 301. Also noted in Gray, *Ākṛasamvara Tantra*, 56. The term "indexical symbol" comes from the semiotic theories of C. S. Peirce (1839–1914).

¹¹⁶ Gray, "Mandala," 300-01. Gray cites as a source for the term *mesocosm* Robert Levy's *Mesocosm: Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar City in Nepal* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990). Gray, "Mandala," 300, n. 30. As is common in correlative cosmologies, the Three Spheres can be linked with other threes. Gray goes on to note the correspondence of the three spheres with other tripartite groupings in Indo-Tibetan thought: the Triple World (S. *triloka*), the Triple Body (S. *trikāya*), and Body, Speech and Mind (a.k.a. the Three Vajras, T. *gsang ba gsum*), and the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, S. *triratna*). Quite apart from correlative cosmologies, my use of microcosm, mesocosm and macrocosm by other names (the I, the We and the It; the subjective, intersubjective and objective; the Beautiful, the Good, and the True, etc.) is also informed by Ken Wilber's synthesis of the work of Karl Popper, Jürgen Habermas and others on this topic. For an overview, see Ken Wilber, *Integral Psychology* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2000), 66-70.

The three spheres are my adaptation of Gray's three levels or domains of significance, used to organize the diverse array of symbols found at Yonghegong. In my model, the microcosm refers to the sphere of symbols relating to the Qianlong emperor's physical presence and history at the site, a sometimes nostalgic and even mythologized past; the mesocosm is the sphere of symbols relating to the socio-political world of the Qing Empire, the imperial ideology of the present; and the macrocosm is the sphere of symbols relating to the realm of Tibetan Buddhist eschatology,¹¹⁷ the coming of the next buddha, Maitreya, whose arrival is heralded by the enlightened reign of the Qianlong emperor, implicitly oriented on the future.

A central intention of the practices of the *Ākṛasamvara Tantra* was to create in the practitioner what Berger and others have termed "a fluid sense of self" that lead to the recognition of its contingent and therefore impermanent nature. Studies of the Manchu ruling elite by Berger, Rawski, Crossley, Elliot and others have pointed to a similar fluidity of identity at the cultural level, what Berger has referred to as an "empire of shifting forms."¹¹⁸ She suggests that it was the Manchu emperors' "...cultural and personal fluency [that] was the very characteristic that defined them most surely" and that the Qianlong emperor's daily practice of Tibetan Buddhism "...provides an especially broad window into understanding this fluid sense of self."¹¹⁹ I contend that the Qianlong emperor's fluid sense of self is exactly the source of the underlying challenge for scholars attempting to interpret the complex textual and material culture of the Qianlong court, and that the three spheres model is a way of systematically addressing this fluidity of identity.

¹¹⁷ I will use eschatology in the broader sense of systems of millenarian beliefs, a usage suggested by Alan Sponberg, rather than relating to the specifically Judeo-Christian notions of the end times. Alan Sponberg, "Epilogue: Prospectus for the Study of Maitreya," in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 295-6.

¹¹⁸ Berger, *Empire*, 5.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

Conclusion

Although the circumstantial evidence suggests that spatial typology and Tibetan Buddhist concepts and practices such as those detailed in the *Ākṛasamvara Tantra* had wide impact among the Qianlong court elite, I am not arguing that they directly informed or drove the making and remaking of Yonghegong. My goal is simply to approach the challenging complexity of Yonghegong by using spatial typology as an interpretive tool. The framework of outer and inner mandalas helps to provide a conceptual unity for the site that was lacking in earlier studies, while that of the three spheres facilitates the systematic unraveling and interpreting of the multilayered messages of the art and architecture. In the end, both the mandalas and the three spheres constitute a unified, symbolic whole linked by the underlying theme of imperial universalism.

Although my conceptual subdivision of Yonghegong allows each element to be discussed independently, it should be remembered that the spheres are not rigidly compartmentalized, but rather coexistent, simultaneous, interconnected, and centered on the person of the emperor.

Crossley notes that:

...[A]cross early modern Eurasia, one finds imperial ideology tending toward a universality of representation that depended not upon all-as-one...but upon one-as-all, that 'one' being the emperor. I have called it concentric in its political cosmology and simultaneous in its expression.¹²⁰

In the specific case of Qianlong-era imperial art and architecture, this universality was often conveyed by the mixing of visual languages. In her discussion of the linguistic and stylistic diversity of Qianlong-era Buddhist art, Berger also points to the aspiration to simultaneity of expression as a central element in these arts:

The abrupt juxtaposition or even counterposition of visual styles—Tibetan against Chinese, Chinese against European, European against Tibetan—is one of the essential characteristics of the Buddhist art of Qianlong's court. It was the very incommensurability of the goals of Chinese, Inner Asian, and European modes of

¹²⁰ Crossley, *Translucent*, 33.

representation—that they do not quite translate one another perfectly but are designed to capture different kinds of information—which may have attracted the Manchus to the possibility of using all of them at once, enabling the emperor-as-patron, just like the Buddha, to speak in all languages simultaneously. We might say that the Manchu’s deployment of several visual or verbal styles allowed them, not to say the same exact thing to everyone, but to say the right thing.

The fact that in some cases the art of the Qianlong court can seem like a somewhat inelegant pastiche, “not quite translating,” in Berger’s terms, is as she suggests, not the point. The point was to convey an ideology through the arts, and the lack of a unifying aesthetic did not significantly detract from this message. As Crossley notes:

[W]hat is meant by ‘ideology’ is the tendency of an individual or group to organize its sensations, or knowledge, in particular ways and to attempt to express the resulting ideas. In the case of the imperial courts, the expression was intended to be dominant, which could be achieved by the sheer mass of the publishing and enforcing capacities of the state, but could also be aided by a certain coherence in the ideology itself. This coherence does not entail logical perfection but was in the Qing instance ... based more upon reinforcing images, allusions, and resonances with a fundamental consistency of figuration.¹²¹

Yonghegong was a product of a particular ideology, one that reinforced imperial rule through complex symbolism and subtle connections between religious teachings and political messages. The centuries of distance between us and the creation of the iconographic program at Yonghegong, and the continuing use of the site as an important Tibetan Buddhist monastery, has led to a focus on the overt religious messages of the site, allowing much of the original, unified message at the site to be overlooked. Recognizing the underlying theme of imperial universalism, and using spatial typology as an interpretive model may provide for us that very coherence, a kind of ‘deep structure’ that can help to form a multifaceted, conceptual crystal out of the inchoate solution of buildings, artistic works and symbols found at Yonghegong.

¹²¹Ibid., 225-6.

Chapter Three: The Three Spheres

This chapter details my interpretive model for examining systematically the multilayered symbolism found at Yonghegong. Differing from most other surveys of the site, this approach emphasizes the centrality of the site's major patron, the Qianlong emperor and what I argue is the fundamental message of the site as it stood in 1792: the universal character of the Qianlong emperor's rule. In my model, the various symbols found at Yonghegong are classified into three symbolic domains, visualized as three concentric spheres with the Qianlong emperor at the center. The first is the microcosm, the somatic dimension that includes traces of the emperor's physical presence at the site. The next is the mesocosm, the socio-political realm, associated with assertions of the emperor's legitimacy among the various constituencies of the Qing Empire. The third and final sphere is the macrocosm, or the emperor's role in a fundamentally Buddhist cosmology, preparing the world for the coming of the next buddha, Maitreya. Although later chapters will address certain works later added to the site and their religious and political significance in their historical context, the three spheres is grounded in the particular significance of the site during the Qianlong period.

Microcosm: the Somatic Dimension

In tantric conceptualizations the first of the three spheres is the realm of the practitioner's body. Here it refers to a set of symbols that relates to the Qianlong emperor's physical presence and personal history at the site. As such, this is a fundamental but limited dimension. All of the microcosmic associations at Yonghegong extend from a seminal event: the birth at the site of Prince Hongli (C. *Hongli* 弘曆), the future Qianlong emperor, on September 25, 1711 (Kangxi 50, 8 月, 13 日). Hongli was the fourth son of Yinzhen 胤禛, the future Yongzheng emperor (雍正,

r. 1722-35), himself the fourth son of the reigning Kangxi emperor.¹²² At the time of Hongli's birth, his father was titled Prince Yong (*Yong qinwang* 雍親王). Hongli was the only child of his mother, later the Empress Xiao Sheng (孝聖 1693-1777) but at the time a relatively low-ranking consort from the respected Niohuru clan of the Bordered Yellow Banner, who had entered Prince Yong's household in 1704.¹²³ In 1711, Prince Yong's residence was known as Yongqinwangfu ("the Mansion of Prince [*qinwang*] Yong"). Hongli was born in the no longer extant eastern section of the site, a vast residential garden known as the Eastern Academy (*Dongshuyuan* 東書院), in a building called the "Chamber of Wish-fulfillment" (*Ruyishi* 如意室), an appropriate site in this case because the birth of a healthy son was a primary wish for any ruler and certainly for a low-ranking consort.¹²⁴ Hongli continued to live at Yongqinwangfu until he was ten and a half, when, in April-May of 1722, he accepted his grandfather the Kangxi emperor's invitation to reside at court and receive further education there.¹²⁵ Later hagiography points to this and other signs of imperial favor that indicated the young prince was destined for greatness.

Although he never lived at Yonghegong again, his memories of his natal residence seem to have remained strong throughout his life, reinforced by yearly ritual visits. The first ten years of life is a period in which fundamental memories and associations are formed, and in later years

¹²² Hongli was the fourth according to official genealogical records. In fact, he was the fifth son, but the chronologically second son Hongpan (1697-99) was renumbered as seventh probably due to his early death. Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-Lung Reign* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), 85-6. At his birth, Hongli had only one living brother, prince Hongshi (弘時 1704-1727), who was later removed from the imperial lineage in 1726 due to his friendship with his father's rival to the throne, prince Yinsi (胤禩 1681-1726). Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 108.

¹²³ Kahn, *Monarchy*, 88. Her full posthumous title is Empress Xiao Sheng Xian of the Niohuru Clan (孝聖憲皇后 鈕祜祿氏). For a detailed discussion of the emperor's relationship with his mother and its political dimensions, see Harold L. Kahn, "The Politics of Filiality: Justification for Imperial Action in Eighteenth Century China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 26, no. 2 (Feb., 1967): 197-203.

¹²⁴ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 213.

¹²⁵ Kahn, *Monarchy*, 98.

certainly the sights and sounds of the familiar site brought up memories for the Qianlong emperor of his youth, his mother and his father. The emperor's special, personal connection to the site and the remnants of his presence there are preserved at Yonghegong in various forms, from personal objects to the emperor's words displayed in stelae and calligraphic inscriptions.

At many locations throughout China, imperial and otherwise, the Qianlong emperor's somewhat inescapable presence is maintained by his words, recorded and displayed in various forms. At many imperial sites, as well as public venues such as religious sites, the emperor's words are carved on large, formal stone stelae placed in prominent locations. At Yonghegong, stelae with the text identified as "imperial produced" (C. *yuzhi* 御製) and "by the imperial brush" (C. *yubi* 御筆) are found in two spots. The first is Courtyard III, where the two stelae are placed in octagonal pavilions to either side of the Gate of Harmony and Peace. The stone slabs display the "Yonghegong Stele Inscription" (C. *Yonghegong beiwen* 雍和宮碑文), dated to the ninth year of the emperor's reign (1744), when Yonghegong was inaugurated as a monastic college. The stele text is written in the four official Qing scripts: Manchu, Chinese, Mongolian and Tibetan.¹²⁶ The second spot is Courtyard IV, where a stele, a single, four-sided slab, is boldly placed on the central axis of the site. This is the inscription titled "On Lamas" (C. *Lamashuo* 喇嘛說), dated to the fifty-seventh year of the emperor's reign (1792), and again appearing in the four scripts, one to each face. The axial placement of this monument engraved with the words of the elderly but supremely confident emperor make it a key feature of the site.

The sense of the emperor's presence is conveyed by his words, echoing down the ages from the formal, stone stelae, but even more forcefully by his calligraphy. Examples of the emperor's calligraphy are still ubiquitous throughout the former Qing empire, displayed on

¹²⁶ Although Uighur written in Arabic script was later added to the official scripts, I assume there was little expectation that the Uighur constituency needed to be addressed at Yonghegong.

carved signboards and column couplet plaques, sometimes carved into stone cliffs, and in many cases in works of actual ink calligraphy. For any literate Chinese person, looking at a work of calligraphy allows the mental reliving of the moment of its creation. As Berger notes, for the emperor, the art of calligraphy was “living vicariously inside a Han Chinese body...a ritualized, meditative communion with the Chinese past.”¹²⁷ More so than even the naturalistic portraits of the emperor done by his Jesuit painters, these works of calligraphy evoke the physical presence of their creator and their moment of creation, and that sense is found throughout Yonghegong in the many works of calligraphy on display there in various forms. Even on wooden signboards, not only is the imperial calligraphy reproduced by intaglio carving, but also the emperor’s seals and the phrase “by the imperial brush,” creating a sense of immediacy even though the works are a few stages removed from the ink original.

One set of calligraphic inscriptions can be further classified as part of the microcosm due to subject matter. Unlike the religious, memorial or historical topics found elsewhere at Yonghegong, these poems evoke the Qianlong emperor’s memories of his youth at his boyhood home. They were formerly on display in the Eastern Academy, the garden area that was his birthplace and the location of the ancestral shrines for the emperor and his father. Although that section of Yonghegong no longer exists, these texts survive in collections of the emperor’s writings, and will be discussed in the context of the Eastern Academy.

Finally, a number of the emperor’s personal objects are preserved at Yonghegong. Some of these items are unsurprising given the monastic context: Tibetan Buddhist ritual crowns and vestments, for example. Others are less expected, but as we will see fit into the larger themes of the site: the “Third-day Tub” (*Xisanpen* 洗三盆), also called the *Fish-Dragon Transformation*

¹²⁷ Berger, *Empire*, 23.

Basin (*Yu long bianhua pan* 魚龍變化盤), a wooden tub purportedly used to bathe the infant Hongli three days after his birth (Fig. 69); the emperor's personal weapons; a saddle and sedan chair; and life-size wooden statues of immense bears the emperor killed during hunts. Although it is difficult to determine whether or not objects like the *Fish-Dragon Transformation Basin* were on display in 1792 as they are today, their presence at the site may have made them akin to the "contact relics" (begging bowls, robes, ritual objects, etc.) of tulkus and other holy persons often enshrined at Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.

Mesocosm: the Socio-Political Dimension

In his analysis of the mandala in relation to traditional political thought among Southeast Asian Buddhist kingdoms, what he terms the "galactic polity," Stanley Tambiah argues for the importance of the political realm to the development of the mandala principle. Contrary to thinking that presupposes cosmology as the inspiration for the mandala (in Tambiah's words granting "ontological priority" to seeing the cosmological level as the basis for developing the mandala principle and then imposing it on the mundane realm), he argues that it arose from sacred and profane spheres that would not have been seen as separate:

"...[T]he sacred as such cannot be persuasively distinguished from a profane domain, and ... the cosmological, religious, political, economic dimensions cannot be disaggregated. What the Western analytical tradition separates and identifies as religion, economy, politics may have either been combined differently, or more likely constituted a single interpenetrating totality."¹²⁸

Like the 'galactic polities' of Southeast Asia, the Qing empire was an "interpenetrating totality," centered on the person of the emperor and understood by the court in spatial terms as represented by Millward's diagram noted earlier. Of course, this simplified cultural geography

¹²⁸ Tambiah, *Culture*, 257.

belies the complex ethno-cultural realities of the actual areas, but as Crossley notes “...monolithic identities of ‘Manchu,’ ‘Mongol,’ and ‘Chinese’ ... are ideological productions of the process of imperial centralization before 1800,”¹²⁹ and the reification of these constituencies was simply part of the ideological machine.

Despite this, at Yonghegong there is only one area in which the constituencies are pointedly distinguished: the multilingual imperial stela inscriptions. The basic arrangement of Millward’s diagram is reflected at Yonghegong on the large, stone imperial steles housed in the three pavilions at the site. They display equivalent inscriptions in four official scripts of the empire (Manchu, Chinese, Mongolian and Tibetan) on the faces of the stele that roughly accord with Millward’s diagram. However, elsewhere at Yonghegong another messaging process was at work, one that was not intended to articulate difference but to proclaim Qing universal imperial rule.

The Language of Imperial Universalism

At Yonghegong, the vocabulary of symbols that makes up the mesocosm relates to imperial roles deriving from traditional ideals of kingship among the ethnic constituencies noted above. These roles include the Mongol tradition of Great Khan (Mo. *khagan*), the Chinese traditions of the Son of Heaven (C. *tianzi* 天子), and the Tibetan Buddhist enhancement of the traditional Buddhist ideal of enlightened ruler, the “Wheel-turning King” (S. *Ākravartin*, C. *zhuanlunwang* 轉輪王 or *zhuanlun shengwang* 轉輪聖王; T. *'khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po*).¹³⁰ Representation of a single ruler in these various roles as an expression of imperial universalism

¹²⁹ Crossley, *Translucent*, 3.

¹³⁰ These imperial roles are discussed throughout Rawski, *Last Emperors*, Crossley, *Translucent*, and Illich, “Selections”. Crossley provides a distinction between *ākravartin* (“Wheel-turner”) and *cakravartirāja* (“Wheel-turning king”), but I will use the more familiar rendering. Crossley, *Translucent*, 234.

was in place at least since the reign of Khubilai Khan in the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), and the Tibetan Buddhist prelates in the service of Khubilai further added to this role the recognition of the Great Khan as an incarnation or emanation of the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī, a role referred to in the Qing period as *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*.¹³¹ The Manchus, as the heirs to the legacy of the Mongol empire, were able to adopt and more fully synthesize these roles, adding to the considerable architecture of their legitimating ideology.

The Qing court's ideal of the universal emperor was far from a simple agglutination of these roles. It had its own internal logic and structure, sometimes based on symbolic resonances and overlapping that worked to reinforce the ideology. I contend that an example of this unity is found in the elaborate construction by the Qianlong court of a symbolic language of imperial universalism designed to legitimize Qing rule. A basic unifying theme in this language is found in the incorporation of two broadly parallel legitimating processes at work in each of the imperial roles: legitimation through inheritance and legitimation through virtue. I first became aware of the idea of these two processes in Rawski's discussion of them in relation to legitimating the Qing emperor as Son of Heaven.¹³² For Rawski, legitimation through inheritance is simply the emperor's status as rightful heir to the throne, and legitimation through virtue relates to Chinese traditions of the Mandate of Heaven and the emperor's public displays of filial virtue.¹³³ While fully accepting Rawski's model, my adaptation of the two processes applies them more widely (to not only Chinese but also Mongol and Tibetan ideals of rule) and defines them differently (legitimation through inheritance as conveyed by birth, but legitimation through virtue as earned through personal efforts). In fact, these two imperial legitimating processes have been detailed individually and often separately in recent scholarship. However, I have not found any specific

¹³¹ Farquhar, "Emperor," 11.

¹³² Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 201-03.

¹³³ Ibid.

discussion that highlights what I argue are the similarities of these two legitimating processes among the Qing imperial roles.¹³⁴ Let me briefly lay out my model of the two processes as they relate to each imperial role, noting previous studies that have addressed the individual characteristics of each.

Beginning with the Mongol role of Great Khan because it was the first adopted by the early Jurchen/Manchu rulers, Johan Elverskog has discussed the legitimating importance of descent from the Borjigin lineage of Chinggis Khan (inheritance), along with two parallel forms of legitimation by virtue: the approval of the Great Khan by “the will of God (Mo. *tengri*),” arising from the cult of Chinggis Khan, and the ruler’s status as *Ākravartin* based on support of the Buddhist Dharma (virtue).¹³⁵ Crossley adds to this what I will call martial virtue: “...the khans ... were precisely those men who had through intense struggle against their rival candidates demonstrated Heaven-favored gifts of intelligence, agility, strength and eloquence.”¹³⁶ For this study, the Qianlong emperor’s legitimation as Great Khan will be related to his descent from the Borjigin line (inheritance) and the emperor’s displays of martial virtue.

For the role of Chinese role of Son of Heaven, while Rawski defined the two processes as noted above, I will add to her idea of filiality as defining virtue the emperor’s role as Chinese literatus. The Qianlong emperor’s diligent practice and mastery of the Chinese literati tradition, including his mastery of not only Confucian but also Chinese Buddhist and Daoist texts, his vast corpus of poetry, his omnipresent calligraphic inscriptions, immense art collection, and construction of scholar’s gardens, is something widely recognized. However, it has only recently been discussed in the work of the New Qing Studies scholars as a collection of practices with a

¹³⁴ Illich notes similarities among the roles of Great Khan, Son of Heaven and *Ākravartin* in relation to the idea of the emperor as *axis mundi*. Illich, “Selections,” 192.

¹³⁵ Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing: The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 40-60.

¹³⁶ Pamela K. Crossley, “The Rulerships of China,” *American Historical Review* 97, no. 5 (1992): 1473.

deeply political dimension, and not simply as an example of imperial Manchu Sinicization. For this study, the Qianlong emperor's legitimation as Son of Heaven will be related to his descent from the Manchu imperial line (inheritance) and the emperor's displays not only of filiality but also of scholarly virtue as a Chinese literatus, both broadly understood as virtues in a Confucian mode.

Finally in the Tibetan Buddhist role of *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*, legitimation through inheritance comes in a slightly different form. Qing emperors were understood to be emanations of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, Mañjuśrī, and part of a lineage of such emanations, as well as incarnations of previous *ākravartins*. This status was conveyed by inheritance of the imperial position, but status as *Ākravartin* required support of the Buddhist Dharma (virtue).¹³⁷ To this was added another form of acquired virtue, the Qianlong emperor's personal devotion to achieving the status of *mahāsiddha* (T. *grub chen*), or master of paranormal abilities, acquired through diligent practice of advanced Tibetan Buddhist systems to which he was initiated by a respected master of such systems, his personal teacher, Rölpe Dorjé.

In this study of the art and architecture of Yonghegong, we will see how these various roles were combined and referenced by the Qing court as a symbolic whole. This elaborate system of signification exemplifies the multicultural fluency that Patricia Berger suggests may have been "...precisely what constituted Manchuness at the imperial level."¹³⁸ I will describe the symbolic system that expressed Qing imperial universalism as a complex iconographic "creole": a distinct symbolic language rooted in a mixing of earlier symbolic systems, but with

¹³⁷ Familial inheritance of status as an incarnation is not unusual. Although the inheritance tradition of the lineages of Dalai and Panchen Lamas are perhaps better known (in which incarnations are discovered irrespective of familial relation to the previous incarnation), that tradition developed partly to counter the perceived deficiencies of the familial inheritance model that was used in the previously politically dominant Sakya order. Martin A. Mills, *Identity, Ritual and State in Tibetan Buddhism: the Foundations of Authority in Gélukpa Monasticism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 269. See also Franz Michael, *Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and its Role in Society and State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

¹³⁸ Berger, *Empire*, 55.

its own vocabulary and syntax that evolved over the generations of Qing rulers.¹³⁹ It was a language whose use was politically charged, limited as it was to the Qing emperors themselves, and expressed most fluently by the Qianlong emperor. This language, although expressed in various forms and modes, had one message that it asserted simultaneously: the legitimacy and universal character of Qing imperial rule. As Crossley explains in relation to the expression of Qing imperial ideology,

[Its] edicts, its diaries, and its monuments were deliberately designed as imperial utterances in more than one language..., as simultaneous expressions of imperial intentions in multiple cultural frames. The simultaneity was not a mere matter of practicality. Each formally written language used represented a distinct aesthetic sensibility and a distinct ethical code. In the case of each language the emperor claimed both, as both the enunciator and the object of those sensibilities and those codes. The separate grammars must, in the end, have the same meaning—the righteousness of emperorship. Or, to use the wheel metaphor that was common among those emperorships in the eighteenth century, the separate spokes must lead to a single hub.¹⁴⁰

The unity of this message may be weakened by the systematic analysis of the constituent elements of the language, and Tambiah's earlier noted caveat about the Western analytical tradition disaggregating what is a totality (in his case in relation to religion, politics and economics) applies equally here. Crossley echoes Tambiah's point in relation to the emperor's roles:

With due attention to the specificities of the institutional references of the Qing emperorship, it may be less necessary to interpret the fact that some parts of the rulership appear "sacral" while others appear "rational," some "nominal" and others "phenomenal," some "corporatist" and others "autocratic," or some "legalist" and some "moralist" as

¹³⁹ I am using the term creole in its strictly linguistic sense, setting aside the significance of the term in Post-Colonial theory, where it relates to discussions of 'hybridity' as areas for creative 'counter-discursive' resistance. Setting aside the question of whether the subaltern can speak, in the case of the imperial creole under discussion it is clearly being spoken only by the "altern," the subaltern in Qing imperial discourse being progressively delimited culturally, linguistically, even sartorially. This is exemplified by Qing court works such as *Foreign Envoys Offering Tributes to the Qing Emperor* (*Huangqing zhigong tu* 皇清職貢圖), where representative images of a man and a woman of numerous foreign groups are presented in characteristic clothing with written descriptions provided. Palace Museum, Beijing, *The Complete Collection of the Treasures of the Palace Museum 14: Paintings by the Court Artists of the Qing Dynasty* [Gugong Bowuyuan Cang Wenwu Zhenpin Quanji 14: Qingdai Gongting Huihua 故宫博物院藏文物珍品全集 14: 清代宫廷绘画] (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1996), 279-98.

¹⁴⁰ Crossley, *Translucent*, 11-12.

contradictions or inconsistencies within an undifferentiated institution of the emperorship. As universalists, the eighteenth century Qing rulers, and the Qianlong emperor in particular, were cognizant of the diverse sources of their order and were meticulous in expressing them. The representations are historically problematic, but the diversity itself need not be.¹⁴¹

Therefore, with the implication of universalism through simultaneity established as the unifying force among the various imperial roles, I will now detail the most prominent imperial roles as they are referenced in the mesocosm at Yonghegong, laying out the vocabulary of the language of Qing universalism as expressed at the site. With the vocabulary noted, I will move on in the following chapters to an exegesis of the language as it is more fully expressed in the “paragraphs and chapters” that the architecture and art at the site provide.

Legitimation in a Mongol Mode: Emperor as Great Khan

In the sixteenth century, the northeast Asian homeland of the Manchus, today parts of Liaodong and Jilin provinces, was a region without a political center, a diverse multiethnic frontier full of many competing peoples, shifting alliances and fluid identities. The Manchus, known until 1635 as Jurchen (C. *Nüzhen* 女真; Ma. *Jušen*), were simply one of these groups, striving for military and political power. In this quest, they first adopted forms of political legitimation that were rooted in Mongol traditions and ideals, reflecting the lasting prestige of the Mongol Empire and the continuing political and cultural importance of Mongol groups in Northeast Asia.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Crossley, *Rulerships*, 1483. Crossley similarly problematizes terms like ‘hybridity’ and ‘ethnicity’ in relation to the culture of the court. Crossley, *Translucent*, 1-52.

¹⁴² For detailed examinations of this topic, see David M. Farquhar, “The Origins of the Manchus’ Mongolian Policy,” in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 198-205; see also Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: the Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 122-27.

One strong indicator of Mongol cultural influence in the region was the use of Mongolian as a common language, at least among regional elites.¹⁴³ In 1599, the Jurchen leader Nurhaci (1559-1626) ordered that the Mongol writing system be adapted for the writing of the Jurchen language, rather than continuing the practice of Jurchen writing in Mongolian for communication and record keeping.¹⁴⁴ Although this was part of a process of creating solidarity for the Jurchen, the choice of Mongolian script indicated its prevalence, if not the continuing prestige of the language. On the political level, Nurhaci found legitimacy through use of the title *khan* (Ma. *han*), a term that had prestige through association with the Mongol empire, but also local currency as a title signifying a military leader.¹⁴⁵ In 1606 after a military defeat of the Khorchin Mongols and their coming under his authority, Nurhaci was elevated by them to the status of *khan* (Ma. *han*) in their relation with him, although the Jurchen continued to refer to him by his Manchu title of *beile* (“headman”).¹⁴⁶ In 1616, Nurhaci granted himself a more expansive title as *khan*, “Enlightened Khan” (Ma. *Genggiyan han*), as part of the process of creating the Jin dynasty (1616-36), later renamed the Qing. He reigned as *khan* of the Jin from 1616 to his death in 1626.

Nurhaci’s successor, Hongtaiji (1592-1643, r. 1626-1643), made more explicit associations between himself and the legacy of the Mongol empire. One connection was literally

¹⁴³ Rawski notes the use of Mongolian among Banner elites. Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 36; Crossley notes the use of Mongolian as the regional *lingua franca*. Crossley, *Translucent*, 186.

¹⁴⁴ This was what is today called “Old Manchu” (M. *tongki fuka akū hergen*, “script without circles or dots”), which was superseded in 1632 by a script with diacritical marks added for clarity, known today as “Standard Manchu” or “Classical Manchu” (M. *tongki fuka sindaha hergen*, “Script with circles and dots”). Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 36. See also the more detailed treatment of the history of Manchu script in Liliya M. Gorelova, *Manchu Grammar* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 49-74. There had been a separate writing system for Jurchen (based on the Chinese-derived Khitan script) surviving from their period of rule as the earlier Jin Dynasty (1115-1234), but its use declined due perhaps to its somewhat unwieldy character.

¹⁴⁵ Crossley, *Translucent*, 139.

¹⁴⁶ The specific title granted him by the Khorchin meant something like “Respected/Honored Khan” (Mo. *Kündülün khan*; Ma. *Kundulen han*). Ibid., 143, n. 19. Crossley also notes that the Khorchin at this time were not always referred to as Mongols by the Jurchen. Their identification as Mongols exclusively came later, as part of the process of the creation of a specific Manchu identity in contrast to the Mongols. Ibid., 207. For a discussion of the title *beile*, see Ibid., 141-2

hereditary. Beginning in the late sixteenth century, intermarriage created political ties between Mongol groups and the Jurchen. Intermarriage was a common diplomatic tool, and intermarriage between Mongol and Manchu nobles continued throughout the Qing period. Hongtaiji's mother, Mongo-gege (1575-1603, posthumously Empress Xiaoci, *Xiaoci gao huanghou* 孝慈高皇后) was from the Borjigin lineage of Chinggis Khan.¹⁴⁷ Hongtaiji himself took as a concubine Princess Bumbutai (*Bumubutai* 布木布泰) of the Borjigit lineage (later known as Empress Dowager Xiaozhuang 孝莊文皇后), who became the mother of the Shunzhi emperor, cementing the Manchus' links by blood to the lineage of Chinggis.¹⁴⁸ This hereditary legitimacy as khan was reinforced by Hongtaiji's military success. In 1632, after years of warfare, Hongtaiji defeated Lighdan Khaghan (1588-1634), leader of the Chakhar Mongols but more importantly the last of the Borjigid lineage and last Great Khan.

After his defeat, Lighdan fled, dying of smallpox a few years later, ca. 1634. In 1635, the Chakhar nobility surrendered to Hongtaiji, and in a tale both created and propagated by him, presented him with what was purportedly the “seal transmitting the state” (C. *chuan'guoxi* 傳國璽; Mo. *qas boo*, “jade seal”), said to be the seal of the Chinese state since the Han dynasty and used for legitimation by Khubilai.¹⁴⁹ On February 2 of 1635, the Sakya lama Mañjuśrī Pandita presented Hongtaiji with a statue of the Tibetan Buddhist deity Mahākāla, which was believed to have been made for Khubilai by his guru Phagpa (Chogyal Phagpa Lodro Gyaltzen, T. *chos rgyal 'phags pa blo gros rgyal mtshan*, 1235-1280). This image and the set of practices with which it was associated, what Samuel M. Grupper calls the Mahākāla cult, were thought to

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 211.

¹⁴⁸ Rawski, *Last Emperors*, 135-6.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 198-99. This claim is debunked in Michael Weiers, “Die politische Dimension des Jadessiegels zur Zeit des Mandschuherrschers Hongtaiji,” *Zentralasiatische Studien* 30: 103-124. Referenced in Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 31.

imbue the initiate with the consciousness of not only the deity but also that of Khubilai and his successors, including the Qing emperors.¹⁵⁰

With the seal and the statue of Mahākāla in hand, and of course their military superiority, the Jurchen became recognized by many Mongol groups as the legitimate successors to the Great Khans. Soon after, Hongtaiji adopted the name “Manchu” for the Jurchen (in 1635) and renamed the Jin Dynasty “Qing” (1636), no longer requiring associations with the centuries-earlier Jurchen Jin Dynasty for legitimacy. From this point in the Qing Dynasty, heredity having been established as a legitimating factor for rule as Great Khan, it was only necessary to prove legitimacy through “virtue.” One kind of virtue, support of the Buddhist Dharma, was portrayed through identification as a *Ākravartin*, a key role at Yonghegong which will be addressed below. The other kind of virtue the Great Khan needed to display is a more familiar one when considering the legacy of Chinggis: martial virtue.

Berger has described Yonghegong as, in part, a “war temple.”¹⁵¹ At Yonghegong, martial associations appear in a number of forms. The first includes objects that make specific reference to the Qianlong emperor’s personal martial character, and, as such, also resonate in the microcosmic sphere. Major examples include the emperor’s personal weapons and armor that were stored at Yonghegong, and two massive, life-size wooden statues representing bears that the emperor had killed in Jilin province. Other martial associations at the site take a more religious form. The most prominent was certainly the existence of the Temple to Guandi 關帝, which, as noted, represented the martial branch of the government in the imperial periphery at Yonghegong. As the God of War, Guandi’s martial associations are clear, but, as we will see, he

¹⁵⁰ Samuel M. Grupper, “The Manchu Imperial Cult of the Early Ch’ing Dynasty: Texts and Studies on the Tantric Sanctuary of Mahākāla at Mukden,” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1980), 97-99. UMI 8016451.

¹⁵¹ Berger notes the emperor’s weapons at the site, as well as worship of Guandi and Yamāntaka. Berger, *Empire*, 118-119.

was multifaceted deity who had special significance to the Manchus (associated with a deified Nurhaci), to the Mongols (associated with Gesar, protector deity of warriors and herds), to the Qianlong emperor, and to Rölpe Dorjé.

Another important martial deity with his own dedicated hall is Yamāntaka, Destroyer of Death, enshrined in the Yamāntaka Tower in the rear section of the site. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Yamāntaka Tower also acted as an entrance to the Temple of Guandi, physically linking these martial deities. As noted in the last chapter, Yamāntaka was considered a protector of Beijing, and the plan of the Qing inner city was said to represent his mandala. According to Berger, the hall was used to store the emperor's personal weapons, and was used for special rituals by court officials during wartime.¹⁵²

The idea of martial virtue as a legitimating power among the Mongols is appropriate, given the fact that the peoples of the steppes represented the greatest potential military threat to the Qing empire. For the Manchu emperor, status as the heir of the Great Khans and the maintenance of that legitimacy through martial virtue, as well as through Buddhist virtue as a *Śakravartin*, was a key component of the management and protection of this vast domain. But what of the majority Chinese population of the Qing empire? For them another form of legitimation was required.

Legitimation in a Chinese Mode: Emperor as Son of Heaven/ Chinese Literatus

While identification as Great Khan was an essential legitimating tool for the early Jurchen/Manchu rulers in their incorporation of Mongol groups into the developing Jin/Qing state, a different set of symbols was required for legitimation in the eyes of the Chinese people of the Northeast, symbols whose adoption seemed prescient as the Qing empire later expanded

¹⁵² Berger, *Empire*, 118.

south to include the territory of the former Ming and the immense population of the Chinese people there. These symbols expressed two roles played by the emperor: the imperial role of Son of Heaven and the cultural role of Chinese literatus.

The Son of Heaven was the most venerable Chinese term for the ruler, its origins found in ancient Zhou Dynasty texts. In this role, the emperor acted as humanity's intermediary with the spirit world, and his right to rule, the "Mandate of Heaven," was passed on in the imperial lineage. Along with this inherited legitimacy, the mandate was also contingent upon demonstrating virtue through ritual performance and behavior. Heaven's approval or disapproval was made clear through natural and astronomical events; however, in practice the Son of Heaven was decidedly focused on this world. His virtue assured the maintenance of order and harmony in nature and among humanity, and for the Qing rulers this virtue was often expressed in terms of filiality. The Qianlong emperor's famous devotion to his mother, the memory of his grandfather the Kangxi emperor, and his father the Yongzheng emperor are all familiar examples of his imperial filiality.

Legitimation among the Chinese literati, who were after all a major target constituency for the role of Son of Heaven, also involved the emperor's demonstration of his mastery of literati cultural traditions, adding to filiality a kind of scholarly virtue. This culture was rooted in the philosophical orthodoxy of the Confucian classics and their emphasis on virtuous rule, requiring the emperor's use of terminology and allusions to this literary tradition at the very least. Furthermore, literati culture also found expression in the arts: calligraphy, poetry and other literature, as well as music and painting. Such mastery was not a requirement of the role of Son of Heaven: many Ming emperors did not find it necessary to legitimize their role through displays of scholarly skills. For the Manchu rulers, however, showing themselves as not simply

“acculturated” but the rightful inheritors and preservers of elite literati culture was an essential legitimating tool among the Han Chinese scholars who staffed the state bureaucracy but could also provide an intellectual core to any rebellious anti-Qing movement.

In the process of state formation, Nurhaci’s main political concern in expanding his domain was with the various Mongol groups, and therefore his role as khan was key in those early stages. However, a reference to Chinese forms of legitimation may be seen in Nurhaci’s reign title, translated as “Mandate of Heaven” (Ma. *abkai fulingga*), although this title may have been declared posthumously by Hongtaiji, whose use of a Chinese political vocabulary was much more pronounced.¹⁵³ After receiving the “seal transmitting the state”, a physical manifestation of the legitimacy he had gained in battle, Hongtaiji took on the mantle of emperor (C. *huangdi* 皇帝; Ma. *hūwangdi*), adopting a dynastic name Qing and reign title Chongde 崇德, along with adopting Chinese state rituals. From this point on, Qing rulers presented themselves as legitimate emperors in the traditional Chinese mode.

At Yonghegong, Chinese imperial symbolism is widespread, expressed in both overt and subtle ways. Most prominent are the yellow imperial roof tiles on the axial buildings that make the status of the site clear even from some distance outside of the walls. Beginning with the ceremonial arches that mark the formal entrance courtyard, painted and carved images of five-clawed imperial dragons are ubiquitous. The buildings themselves display architectural characteristics that are exclusively imperial, from the court-regulated sizes of the columns and bracket sets to the apotropaic eave sculptures, and the layout of the axial buildings in the first courtyard of the ritual core that is clearly reminiscent of the axial buildings of the Forbidden City. These are all symbols to which the emperor had rightful claim due to his inherited position.

¹⁵³ Crossley, *Translucent*, 143. Crossley also notes that the term *abkai fulingga* had its own independent resonance in Manchu, and was not entirely dependent on Chinese thought.

Symbols of legitimation through virtue are also found throughout Yonghegong. Filiality is expressed in the important function of the site as an ancestral shrine, and the references to this function in site inscriptions. More prominently on display at the site, though, are examples of the emperor's status as Chinese literatus, a role for which the Qianlong emperor is widely known today, even if his prolific and prolix inscriptions on the canonical works of Chinese painting history are vilified by most historians of Chinese art.

In the field of Chinese art history, the Qianlong emperor casts a long shadow. The immense art collection he amassed, the largest in Chinese history, makes up the enormous bulk of both the Palace Museum collection in Beijing and the National Palace Museum collection in Taiwan. These collections include many works familiar to any student of the history Chinese art, but these works also include the emperor's numerous inscriptions and seals that have made him notorious. Historically, adding comments and seals to works of art, particularly painting and calligraphy, has long been a tradition among Chinese collectors and connoisseurs, adding a sort of pedigree and scholarly imprimatur to the works and situating them in a multigenerational lineage of discourse on art. The addition of the calligraphy, comments, or seals of any emperor further imbued a work with imperial grandeur by association.

However, there can be too much of a good thing, and the emperor's truly excessive placing of seals along with what Jan Stuart has called his "ponderous and sometimes vacuous" commentary have given the emperor a reputation for unbridled egotism.¹⁵⁴ Stuart, in a brief, cogent essay on the topic, puts the emperor's "serial defacing" of the canon of Chinese art into a more comprehensive context. She makes the point that the emperor's seals and comments worked on a number of levels, both personal and political:

¹⁵⁴ Jan Stuart, "Qianlong and Paintings: Astute Connoisseur, Serial Defacer, or Both?" in *Splendors of China's Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign of Emperor Qianlong*, by Chuimei Ho and Bennet Bronson (London; New York: Merrell; [Chicago]: Field Museum, 2004) 221.

This aggressive marking of art allowed him to assert his ego and pride in ownership of a collection finer than any previous emperor's, while at the same time his inscriptions allowed him to manipulate important cultural properties as part of his political strategy. The emperor was astute and even ruthless in using the Palace collection. However, his profound level of connoisseurship and genuine delight in art must be recognized.¹⁵⁵

The political strategy she refers to was the emperor's efforts to demonstrate his mastery in the realm of Chinese elite culture and thus to claim legitimacy as the ruler of China with a legitimacy not only based on Qing military force.

At Yonghegong, the literatus role is found both in the archetypal scholar's retreat in the former gardens and buildings of the Eastern Academy, and even more clearly in the many calligraphic inscriptions by the emperor noted earlier. Not only do they reflect Chinese tradition as works of Chinese calligraphy, they also demonstrate the self-expression that is so central to Chinese elite literary culture. Although the microcosmic aspect of such inscriptions as pointing to the physical presence of the emperor has been addressed, the sense that the emperor himself composed these erudite, multilayered phrases or wrote poems about his history at the site has undeniable political significance. Inscriptions identified as written by the emperor, whether truly products of the imperial brush or not, show the emperor's command of the traditional Chinese art of calligraphy, and the content of the texts show his mastery of the corpus of the Chinese literary tradition, including the use of Buddhist terms in Chinese. Even the very "personal" poems that reference the Eastern Academy, noting memories and feelings for his parents and for his childhood home, reflect the central role that filial devotion played in Confucian imperial ideology, making it difficult to discuss the emperor's relationship to his parents in strictly personal terms.

The former Ming territories that the Qing had in firm control by the end of the seventeenth century were the most populous and productive part of the Qing empire. In ruling it,

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

the status of the Manchu elite as non-Chinese rulers required them to expend great effort to demonstrate their legitimacy, and the emperor's roles as Son of Heaven and Chinese literatus were key parts of that legitimating strategy. The fact that, until the recent efforts of the New Qing studies, these were seen as the only Qing imperial roles and that the Manchu court was typically described as being fully sinicized, points to the lasting effectiveness of that strategy in the Chinese cultural milieu and among the generations of Western sinologists who were trained within it. Because of this, another key imperial role remained largely ignored until David M. Farquhar's seminal study of the emperor as *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*, a form of legitimation rooted in Tibetan politico-religious thought.¹⁵⁶ This final role in the symbolic language of Yonghegong is somewhat more complex than either Great Khan or Son of Heaven because it not only provides legitimacy in the mesocosm but also acts as a bridge to the more expansive realm of the macrocosm.

Legitimation in a Tibetan Mode: Emperor as Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin

The imperial role of *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* was most fully articulated during the Qianlong reign, and in order to understand its force as a legitimating concept, I will begin by introducing some of the basic characteristics of the original *Ākravartin* ideal, noting a few ideologically-reinforcing parallels with the other roles, before discussing the more complex *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* role in the final section of the mesocosm.

Parallels between the Roles of Son of Heaven and Ākravartin

For the Manchus, *Ākravartin* was a role that found its first explicit expression in the developing Manchu state under Hongtaiji, and was closely linked to his legitimation as Great

¹⁵⁶ Farquhar, "Emperor."

Khan.¹⁵⁷ One very basic parallel that links the roles of Son of Heaven and Great Khan with the *Ākravartin* is noted by Illich: the idea that in each role the ruler acts as an *axis mundi*, a sacral ruler uniting Heaven, Earth and Humanity.¹⁵⁸ As the *Ākravartin* ideal developed in South Asia and later in Tibet and Inner Asia, it took on a decidedly Buddhist orientation, and, like the other imperial roles, was legitimized by a combination of inheritance and virtue, in this case virtue defined as support of the Dharma. This overlapping of distinct roles is another example of Crossley's "...reinforcing images, allusions, and resonances" that made up Qing imperial ideology. I will focus here on those areas of overlap between the roles of *Ākravartin* and the Son of Heaven.

Although historically the *Ākravartin* ideal is most often associated with the ancient Indian emperor Aśoka (r. ca. 269 BC to 232 BC), its existence as a political ideal is of great antiquity in India, appearing in pre-Buddhist texts such as the *Upaniṣads* and non-Buddhist texts like the *Arthaśāstra* noted above.¹⁵⁹ An early Buddhist articulation of the characteristics of the *Ākravartin* is found in the Chinese Tripiṭaka in a sūtra titled "The Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel" (C. *Zhuanlun shengwang shizhou jing* 轉輪聖王師子吼經) in the "Long Discourses" (S. *Dīgha Āgama*, C. *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經).¹⁶⁰ I will briefly recount key elements of the sūtra, relating these early Buddhist *Ākravartin* ideals to their expression at the Qianlong court.

¹⁵⁷ For the links between Nurhaci and Tibetan Buddhism, see Crossley, *Translucent*, 210-12.

¹⁵⁸ Illich, "Selections," 192.

¹⁵⁹ John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 48.

¹⁶⁰ T0001_01.0039a21 - T0001_01.0042b19, 佛說長阿含第二分轉輪聖王修行經第二 (accessed May, 2011), <http://21dtk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/ddb-sat2.php?mode=detail&useid=0001_01,0037&nonum=&kaeri=>. Discussed in Strong, *Legend*, 45-49. A full English translation of the version in the Pali Canon ("Cakkavatti Sihanāda Sutta" from the *Dīgha Nikāya* (DN 26) appears in the appears in Maurice Walshe, *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 395-405. Further articulation of the ideal of the *ākravartin* appears in DN 17 and MN 129.

The text tells of the *Ākravartin* Daḥanemi (C. *Jiangunian* 堅固念).¹⁶¹ He is described as “a righteous monarch of the law,” conqueror of the four continents (C. *sitianxia* 四天下), possessing the Seven Jewels of Royal Power of the *Ākravartin* (the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the gem, the queen, the householder or general, and the minister), and a thousand heroic sons. Of the Seven Jewels, the wheel (S. *ākra*) is listed first, and is the fundamental symbol of the *Ākravartin*. The wheel allows unfettered movement to the four directions and the peaceful subjugation of the peoples there. The text emphasizes that the wheel only appears when the king rules with righteousness, and it floats above the palace for all to see.

When it is reported to Daḥanemi that the wheel is beginning to slip from its position, he realizes that his time on earth is coming to an end, and he abdicates to his eldest son and becomes an ascetic. The wheel soon disappears, and the son goes to his father for advice. Daḥanemi reveals that the wheel is not simply an heirloom, but something that must be earned by ruling with righteousness, specifically, the following and propagation of the Buddhist Dharma. The son follows the Dharma, the wheel reappears, and this sequence of events (abdication, revelation, reappearance) is repeated through six more reigns. The seventh king provides a negative example, ruling according to “his own ideas,” and chaos reigns over the world, descriptions of which may be a commentary on the societal conditions of the day. The Buddha goes on to prophesize that little by little things will improve until another *Ākravartin*, named Sankha (C. *Xiangjia* 嚮伽), reigns and ushers in the coming of Maitreya (S. *Maitreya Tathāgata*; C. *Milerulai* 彌勒如來), the next Buddha.

The key difference between the Buddhist ideal of the *Ākravartin* and earlier Indian expressions of it lies in the importance of righteousness as the defining characteristic that allows

¹⁶¹ Walshe, *Long Discourses*, 395.

both for ease of rule and for a utopian world to manifest. This is emphasized in Strong's discussion of the text:

In the *śakravartin* myth...the king is a crucial part of the Golden Age. By his very presence and by his proper rule, he ensures a peaceful, prosperous, idyllic existence for all, and he will continue to do so as long as he is righteous enough to merit the Wheel of the Dharma, that is as long as he truly is a wheel-turning *śakravartin* king.¹⁶²

In the parts of the sutra recounted above, we see clear parallels with the legitimating ideals of the Son of Heaven. The king inherits his position, but must rule with righteousness, described as a mystical force that allows the ruler to subjugate enemies without violence and to create peace and prosperity by his very presence. This is a concept that resonated equally strongly in Buddhist and Confucian contexts. In traditional Chinese political thought, the virtue that confers the Mandate of Heaven to a ruler is understood as a quasi-mystical quality, described by A. C. Graham as "...the power to move others without exerting physical force,"¹⁶³ i.e. ruling by 'inaction' (C. *wuwei* 無為). It is this force of virtue, which brings subjects peacefully under the emperor's authority, whether articulated in Buddhist, Confucian or even Daoist terms, that underpins the multicultural ideology of the Qing empire, seen in court guest ritual, the tribute system, even the very presence of the Mongol monks and lamas at Yonghegong.

These examples highlight some of the symbolic overlap in the roles of Son of Heaven and early Buddhist descriptions of the *Śakravartin*. However, further development of the *Śakravartin* ideal in Tibet and at the Mongol court during the Yuan dynasty allowed for an even more expansive imperial role, emperor as *Mañjughoṣa-Śakravartin*. Legitimacy continues to derive from inheritance and virtue, but both the source of the inheritance and the consequences of the emperor's virtuous behavior expanded beyond the political realm and into the realms of Buddhist soteriology and eschatology.

¹⁶² Strong, *Legend*, 48.

¹⁶³ Graham, *Disputers*, 13.

The Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin

Having established the basic character of the Buddhist *Ākravartin* as a virtuous ruler and how the role parallels other legitimating models in use at the Qing court, I will turn in this section to a further elaboration of the *Ākravartin* ideal that arose in a Tibetan context: the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*. While Tibetan Buddhist politico-religious ideology was introduced to the Qing court in its formative stages by both Mongol subjects and Tibetan Lamas, during the Qianlong period, the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* role became a central part of the emperor's universalist language. In recent studies that have begun to highlight this role, much of the textual support for its importance in the eighteenth century depends on a single source, the *Biography of Rölpe Dorjé*.¹⁶⁴ Although I am confident that further textual support for the Qianlong emperor's practice of Tibetan Buddhism exists in the vast Qing archives, whose Manchu and to a lesser extent Mongolian and Tibetan language documents are only beginning to be accessed, the vast array of Tibetan Buddhist art produced by the Qianlong court provide another kind of evidence that will be emphasized in this study. In fact the most explicit expression of this role is found in the portrait series *The Qianlong Emperor as Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* noted earlier, two examples of which are at Yonghegong and which will be discussed throughout this study.

The political utility of Tibetan Buddhism has long been assumed to be its foremost attraction for the Qianlong court. The form of Tibetan Buddhism patronized by the Qing Empire was the Gelug tradition, or Gelugpa (T. *dge lugs pa*; C. 格鲁派), referred to in Qing documents as the "Yellow Religion" (*huangjiao* 黄教) and popularly known today as the "Yellow Hat" tradition. Tsongkhapa (T. *tsong kha pa*, 1357–1419), whose colossal image dominates the interior of Yonghegong's Hall of the Dharma Wheel, is most often described as the founder of

¹⁶⁴ Tuguan Luosang Xiji Nima, *Zhangjia guoshi*.

this tradition. Beginning with the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lozang Gyatso (T. *ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1617-1682), it became the politically dominant of the four major orders of Tibetan Buddhism.

The assertion that Qing support was only motivated by political interests is ostensibly supported by the Qianlong emperor's oft-quoted statement found on the 1792 *Lamashuo* stele inscription at Yonghegong: "In promoting the Gelugpa, we pacify the Mongol multitudes. Because this connection is not insignificant, we cannot but protect it."¹⁶⁵ The seemingly unequivocal nature of the statement has led to its being used with some frequency as evidence for the court's purely political motivation in support for Tibetan Buddhism in general.¹⁶⁶ Aside from the rather dubious notion that the emperor would boldly assert in a public stele in the middle of the most important Tibetan Buddhist site in the capital that everything the reader saw surrounding them was merely a manipulative show, a careful reading of the essay provides a more nuanced understanding of the emperor's intent. This intent was to assert his legitimacy in ruling on matters related to the succession of high-ranking *tulkus* due to his role as emperor and to his own special knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism.

¹⁶⁵ My translation of 興黃教，即所以安眾蒙古，所系非小，故不可不保護之。 Lessing's translation is widely quoted: "By patronizing the Yellow Church we maintain peace among the Mongols. This being an important task we cannot but protect this (religion)." Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 59. My source for the Chinese text is a published rubbing of the original: Chang Shaoru 常少如, ed., *Qianlong Yubi Lama Shuo* 乾隆御筆喇嘛說 ("On Lamas' Written by the Imperial Brush of the Qianlong Emperor") (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu shejing yishu chubanshe, 1998).

¹⁶⁶ Illich provides an excellent, detailed overview of the history of academic interpretations of Qing patronage of Tibetan Buddhism, both strictly political and otherwise. Illich, "Selections," 160-66. See also Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 3. For a study of the Yonghegong stele inscriptions, see James L. Hevia, "Emperors, Lamas and Rituals: Political Implications in Qing Imperial Ceremonies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 16 (1993): 243-78.

In the context of the essay, which is after all titled “On Lamas” and not “On Tibetan Buddhism,”¹⁶⁷ the emperor is clearly not talking about his patronage of the religion as a whole, but only of the leaders of the Gélukpa, the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, because of *their* political importance. He goes on pointedly to contrast the blind adulation of lamas by the Yuan court and his own management of them with “justice and insight.”¹⁶⁸ In the specific historical context of 1792 when the essay was written, the emperor was reacting to a Gurkha raid on the Panchen Lama’s Tashilhunpo monastery the year before, a raid he asserts was possible due to the collusion of the Grand Lama Rje-srung (C. *Dalama Jizhong* 大喇嘛濟仲), who the emperor subsequently had defrocked and beheaded. This act and the emperor’s development of the new “Golden Urn” lot-drawing system for the selection of tulku to avoid political manipulation of the process are put forth as examples of the emperor’s more sober control of the lamas.¹⁶⁹ In the end, it is in part the emperor’s Buddhist scholarly virtues that allow him to judge on such matters: his mastery of the Tibetan scriptures (*Bojing* 番經),¹⁷⁰ and “understanding of the underlying principles [of the religion].”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ That is, *Lamashuo* 喇嘛說 not *Lamajiaoshuo* 喇嘛教說. Lessing translates the title “Dissertation on Lama(ism),” but the text clearly focuses on the relationship between Yuan through Qing emperors and various lamas, not on the courts’ relationship to the religion as a whole. For a critique of the term “Lamaism” see Lopez, “Lamaism.”

¹⁶⁸ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 61.

¹⁶⁹ The urns are referred to as the “golden *benba* vase” (C. *Jinbenba ping* 金奔巴瓶), *benba* a Chinese transliteration of the Tibetan *bumpa* (T. *bum pa*) for “ritual vase.” One vase was to be kept at Yonghegong, and used for the selection of Mongolian reincarnate lamas (M. *khubilghan*, earning the title *khutukhtu* after training and coming of age). Another vase was to be kept at the Jokhang Monastery in Lhasa, and was to be used for selecting Tibetan reincarnate lamas or *tulku*, including high-ranking tulku such as the Dalai and Panchen lamas. To what extent the vase was actually used for this purpose in Tibet is currently highly contested. See for example the PRC government version in Gewang Siren, *The Fourteenth Dalai Lama* (Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe, 1997), 13-23; for the Tibetan Government in Exile version, see “Tibetans Reject China’s Attempt to Choose Tibetan Spiritual Leaders,” Central Tibetan Administration, September 3, 2007, <<http://tibet.net/2007/09/03/tibetans-reject-chinas-attempt-to-choose-tibetan-spiritual-leaders/>>.

¹⁷⁰ Although the character 番 is usually pronounced *fan*, when referring to Tibet, I suspect it should be pronounced *bo*, probably a transliteration of the Tibetan word for Tibet (T. *bod*), rather than the more common pronunciation *fan*, meaning “foreign, barbarian.” When referring to Tibetan monks (*fanseng* 梵僧) in the 1744 Yonghegong stele essay, the emperor uses the character *fan* 梵 meaning “Indian, Brahmanic,” which Lessing takes as a euphemism for what he terms “the ‘despicable’ Mongols,” that is used only in the Chinese text of the essay. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 13. Although the shift to the use of 番 in referring to Tibetan monks 番僧 in 1792 might be taken as *fan* (meaning

A number of scholars has questioned whether the sheer complexity of the Qianlong-era expression of the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* role, and the emperor's apparent dedication to it, can be explained away as simple political expedience. James Hevia was one of the first to express this idea:

It seems ... plausible to assume that emperors could have achieved the sort of political manipulations of Buddhist populations with which they are often charged simply by patronizing Buddhism from a distance. It was not, in other words, necessary for them to participate in these rituals to benefit from being identified with Buddhism. What, then, could have been the motive of Manchu emperors?¹⁷²

Illich expands upon this idea:

[T]he time-worn assertion that Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism were, at best, peripheral forces in the unfolding of Qing dynastic history leaves us with a puzzling conundrum: if Tibet was, in fact, just a stop en route, and if its Buddhist ritual specialists were just a corps of cultic spiritualists consumed with an ethereal otherworld that everywhere defied the gravity of earth-bound power, “real” power, in its military and political iterations, then how can we account for the inordinate resources—fiscal, ideological, and ritual—that the Qing dedicated to make themselves look like genuine Tibetan Buddhist patrons, protectors and devotees?¹⁷³

To this I would add that a significant proportion of the Qianlong emperor's material legacy of Tibetan Buddhist patronage survives in spaces that were not places of public display and therefore political value, such as the private chapels of the Forbidden City, or in the

“foreign, barbarian”) in relation to the harsh tone of the text, the same character is used for Tibetan scriptures 番經, to which I doubt the emperor would have intended such a negative subtext.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 61. The bracketed addition is mine. A fascinating and somewhat paradoxical aspect of the essay is the emperor's use of Buddhist concepts seemingly to criticize the very underpinnings of the tulku system, but again not Tibetan Buddhism as a whole. He argues that “[The institution of *khutukhtu*] is only a temporary makeshift dictated by practical needs. (It is a practice) of old standing which cannot be discontinued.” Ibid., 59. He goes on to note: “... the Buddha was never born (or: has no phenomenal life); how could there be (continuous rebirth through) generations (佛本無生豈有轉世)?” Ibid., 60. This effort to delegitimize tulku selected for political reasons (i.e. from the same family) is surprising in that it seems to question the wider tulku institution, and perhaps by extension the emperor's own identification as a tulku. This is a question that requires further study, but I suspect that for the Qianlong emperor, whose hereditary legitimacy was never in question, identification as a tulku may not have been as important as a legitimizing factor, particularly at such a late point in his reign.

¹⁷² James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 40-41. Quoted in part in Illich, “Selections,” 170, n. 248.

¹⁷³ Illich, “Selections,” 165-66.

emperor's tomb.¹⁷⁴ Both Hevia and Illich conclude that a major factor in the Qing court's lavish patronage of Tibetan Buddhism and in particular the Qianlong emperor's participation in Tibetan Buddhist rituals and practices, was an acceptance of the tradition's soteriological assertions: that practice could lead to the emperor's personal enlightenment and mastery of paranormal powers; the spread of the Dharma and the raising of consciousness throughout the empire; and finally, at the macrocosmic level, the creation of conditions that would hasten the arrival of the Buddha Maitreya.¹⁷⁵

The role of *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* combined the earlier Ākravartin ideal with a number of Tibetan innovations in the ideology of rule, innovations that I will discuss separately but that are intertwined and mutually reinforcing.¹⁷⁶ The first was the recognition of the emperor as a tulku, in this case an emanation of the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī, and therefore part of a spiritual lineage of such emanations. The second is the Tibetan tradition is of the ruler as *mahāsiddha*, or master of tantric magic. The emperor's personal practice of Tibetan Buddhist tantric techniques was believed to allow him access to the combined wisdom of Mañjuśrī and his previous incarnations, as well as to harness various supernormal powers known as *siddhi* (T. *dingos grub*). These roles, like the other imperial roles discussed above, can also be understood as representing a form of legitimation through heredity (tulku) and legitimation through virtue (*mahāsiddha*), in this case the virtue of Buddhist academic study and spiritual practice, akin to the mastery of literati skills in the Chinese mode. Access to *siddhi* was granted by the emperor's

¹⁷⁴ The Tibetan Buddhist character of the Qianlong emperor's tomb is noted in Pamela Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1997), 115-16.

¹⁷⁵ Hevia focuses on the idea of the emperor's enlightenment. Hevia, *Cherishing*, 41. Crossley also notes it. Crossley, *Translucent*, 328. Illich's more lengthy analysis details the other aspects throughout her study. Illich, "Selections."

¹⁷⁶ Farquhar provides an overview of earlier references from Chinese history to various Chinese emperors as buddhas or bodhisattvas from the Northern Wei to the Sui, but argues that "...locating or identifying them among well-known contemporaries ... has been a Tibetan specialty." Although he simply uses the term bodhisattva in the section quoted, he clearly means transcendent bodhisattvas like Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara. Farquhar, "Emperor," 11.

initiation and education in advanced forms of Tibetan Buddhist practice by Rölpe Dorjé, the emperor's religious adviser and personal guru. This relationship in itself was an important legitimating Tibetan institution known as the "lama-patron" relationship (T. *mchod yon*), although as we will see the relationship was less central to legitimacy than it had been before the Qianlong period. The following overview of Tibetan contributions to Qing ideology is indebted to Farquhar's seminal study of the "emperor as bodhisattva" and the lama-patron relationship, and to Marina Illich's detailed study of Rölpe Dorjé's biography that includes discussion of the lama-patron relationship and the emperor as mahāsiddha.¹⁷⁷

Emperor as Tulku

Although in the sutra discussed earlier virtue was the more salient defining point in granting status as a *Ākravartin* and heredity was downplayed, the later development of the *Ākravartin* ideal during the Yuan dynasty brought greater significance to heredity in the discourse through the adaptation of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of tulku incarnation lineages. These lineages are premised on the belief that individuals unrelated by blood can be part of a spiritual lineage of incarnations of various Buddhist deities, the most prominent example being the lineage of the Dalai Lamas as manifestations of Śadakṣarī Avalokiteśvara. These lineages were a development of the Tibetan religio-political system that from a political standpoint provided institutional continuity in a celibate monastic context lacking consanguineal inheritance, and from a religious standpoint invested the individual incarnation with a multifaceted,

¹⁷⁷ Farquhar, "Emperor;" also Farquhar, "Origins," 202-3, 335, n. 42, 43.

supramundane charisma.¹⁷⁸ It is this charismatic dimension that is most relevant in the Qing imperial context.

Recognition of the Qing emperors as emanations of Mañjuśrī had significant historical resonance, due in part to the deity's status as a kind of patron bodhisattva of China. As early as the Tang dynasty, miraculous visions of Mañjuśrī were seen at the mountain site of Wutaishan (五台山 "Five-terraced Mountain"), and associations of Wutaishan with the five peaked mountain noted as the abode of Mañjuśrī in various Buddhist texts became widely accepted.¹⁷⁹ Later in the Yuan dynasty, the Yuan emperor Khubilai was identified as Mañjuśrī incarnate in a concept rooted in the Tibetan tradition of recognizing rulers and others as manifestations of deities.¹⁸⁰ Such identifications became less prominent among the Mongols after the fall of the Yuan, but began to appear again with the rise of the Qing.

As the heir to the Great Khans, the Qing emperor Hongtaiji was associated with Mañjuśrī in an early letter from the Fifth Dalai Lama (T. *Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1617-1682), who later also referred to Hongtaiji's successor the Shunzhi emperor as the "Great Mañjughoṣa Emperor" (T. *goñma 'jams pa'i byaṅs čhen po*), a term which became a frequent epithet for the emperor in Tibetan and Mongolian.¹⁸¹ Later the Kangxi emperor was identified as both a *Ākravartin* and emanation of Mañjuśrī in the 1718-20 preface to the Qing court-produced

¹⁷⁸ For a political interpretation of the tulku system, see Turrel Wylie, "Reincarnation: a Political Innovation in Tibetan Buddhism," *Proceedings of the Csoma de Kőrös Memorial Symposium : held at Mátrafüred, Hungary, 24-30 September, 1976*, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978). For a view from within the tradition, see Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, *Enthronement: the Recognition of the Reincarnate Masters of Tibet and the Himalayas* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1997).

¹⁷⁹ The texts are the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, translated in the fifth century, which identifies Mañjuśrī as dwelling to the northeast of India, and the *Mañjuśrīdharmaratnagarbhadhāraṇī*, translated in 710, which states that the bodhisattva lives in the Five Peaked mountains in the country Mahācīna, northeast of India. Farquhar, "Emperor," 13.

¹⁸⁰ A well-known source for this association is the 1345 inscriptions on the Juyongguan 居庸關 Yuntai 雲台 ("Cloud Terrace") gate monument, among other Yuan sources. Ibid., 12-15.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 19-20. Tibetan term from Ibid., 28.

Tibetan Buddhist canon in Mongolian, the “*Red Kanjur*.”¹⁸² However, the idea of “emperor as tulku” became more developed and certainly more articulated during the Qianlong period.¹⁸³ Clearly the charismatic aspect of his status could help to garner legitimacy and present the emperor as a uniting figure among the various Mongol groups, and help to underpin the paternalistic character of Qing imperial pronouncements to these Mongols.

At Yonghegong, the preservation of the Qianlong emperor’s personal objects points to this charismatic aspect, the objects preserved like the ‘contact relics’ of other tulku. However, a key benefit of the Qing emperor’s tulku status needs to be contextualized historically, and relates to the development and expansion of the empire. Illich details the central importance of the Fifth Dalai Lama as a potential rival for Inner Asian supremacy to the nascent Qing Empire:

By taking power as the head of Tibet’s newly-forged Ganden Podrang government [the Tibetan government headed by the Dalai Lama, founded in 1642]... the Dalai Lama effectively conjoined the powers of lama and king in the hands of a single monastic “lama-king” in a way that powerfully undermined Manchu imperial ambitions. His newly-forged model of enlightened Tantric sovereignty institutionalized a counter-model of lay-saṅgha symbiosis that retained outside kings merely as fiscal and sometimes military backers while usurping for himself ... a whole range of powers traditionally associated with the cakravartī emperor. Thus, even as he actively promoted the Qing rulers as exemplary manifestations of Mañjuśrī, the Dalai Lama radically marginalized their power and grandeur as Buddhist emperors by co-opting the mantle of Bodhisattva kingship for himself.¹⁸⁴

Illich further points out that identifying the Qing emperors as emanations of Mañjuśrī was not unique:

In short, in promoting the image that the Qing emperors were emanations of Mañjuśrī, the Dalai Lama was merely adding the Manchus to a longer list of patrons, including

¹⁸² Ibid., 9. Farquhar also suggests that the similarity of the name Mañjuśrī with the newly-minted ethnonym Manchu (pronounced “*manju*” in Manchu) may have influenced the Dalai Lama’s support. Ibid., 20. Ts’ai Mei-fen gives the source for this as the 1777 *History of the Origins of Manchuria* (*Qinding Manzhouyuanliu shi*). Ts’ai Mei-fen, “Tibetan Buddhist Implements from the Qing Imperial Collection,” *Orientalia* 26, no. 9 (1995): 72-77.

¹⁸³ For the specifics of the Qianlong emperor’s tulku lineage, see Vladimir L. Uspensky, “The Previous Incarnations of the Qianlong Emperor According to the Panchen Lama Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes,” in *Tibet, Past and Present: Tibetan Studies 1*: PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000, ed. Henk Blezer (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 215-228.

¹⁸⁴ Illich, “Selections,” 176-77.

notable Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese figures, whom the Ganden Podrang adulated as manifestations of the Bodhisattva over the centuries. That is, he was merely promoting one of many constituencies who served him or his order as patrons and protectors.¹⁸⁵

Furthermore, Illich contends that the special character of the Dalai Lama's new model of lama-king rulership resulted in the Qing rulers broadening the scope of their legitimating program:

No longer in a position to consolidate control over Gélukpa Inner Asia simply by projecting themselves as classical cakravarti patron-kings, the Manchus now had to actively rival the Dalai Lama and co-opt his newly consolidated mandate of enlightened Tantric sovereignty for themselves. ... To rival the Dalai Lama, that is, the Qing emperors had to produce themselves as patrons *and* practitioners, lay (universal) emperors *and* monastic exemplars, Bodhisattva kings *and* Tantric virtuosi with powers over the unseen realms.¹⁸⁶

By the time of the Qianlong emperor, the successors to the Fifth Dalai Lama were no longer major contenders for rule of Inner Asia, but the political utility of the role continued as it still resonated with the Qing Mongols and added to the emperor's legitimacy. It was also particularly valuable as the Qianlong emperor battled with the final rivals for Inner Asian dominance, the Mongol Zunghar empire, which was finally defeated in 1757. The role may have had other significance for the Qianlong emperor, whose love for multivalent symbolism is a key focus of this study. The iconographic attributes of Mañjuśrī are the book and the sword, the book, identified as a *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, representing the Bodhisattva's mastery of transcendental wisdom, and the sword representing the piercing ability of this wisdom to cut through ignorance of the true non-dual reality (paradoxically by cleaving this ignorance in two). For the emperor, these identifiers of Mañjuśrī may have made him a uniquely attractive bodhisattva, as they seem to suggest not only the military and civil branches of the Qing

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 176-77, n. 252.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 177.

government that the emperor wields, but also the personal mastery of the arts of peace and war that he often demonstrated publically in his calligraphy and on yearly hunts.

Moreover, the emperor's status as a tulku not only provided him with a religious status equivalent to the Dalai Lama, but also may have suggested a kind of Pan-Asian, Buddhist binary religio-political cosmology. The unity of wisdom and compassion is one of the fundamental characteristics of enlightenment in Tibetan Buddhist thought, and this theological unity is mirrored by the political unity of these two emanations of the bodhisattvas of wisdom and compassion, Avalokiteśvara (the Dalai Lama) and Mañjuśrī (the Qing emperor).¹⁸⁷ This cosmology parallels the lama-patron relationship that was the source for the other aspect of the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* role, the Emperor as Mahāsiddha.

Emperor as Mahāsiddha

The idea of Buddhist monks aiding the state through their command of various magical abilities has a long history in China.¹⁸⁸ The power to predict the future, see actions at a distance, summon rain and control the weather, and to provide blessings and protection, among other skills, had an obvious attraction for rulers, but the idea of the ruler having personal control of such forces, and not needing to depend on a monastic specialist, seems only to have been adopted by the Qing court in its effort to compete with the Fifth Dalai Lama.¹⁸⁹ Mastery of these powers adds a dimension of legitimation by virtue through personal efforts to the Tibetan modes of legitimation, parallel to the

¹⁸⁷ To this pair of bodhisattva incarnations is sometimes added the Jebtsundamba Khutuktus of Mongolia as incarnations of Vajrapāṇi, the Bodhisattva of Power. Berger, *Empire*, 120. For the Jebtsundamba Khutuktus as potential rivals to the Fifth Dalai Lama, see Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 195, n. 32.

¹⁸⁸ A survey of the subject through the Tang dynasty is provided in Chou Yi-liang's early study. Chou Yi-liang, "Tantrism in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8, no. 1 (March, 1944): 241-332.

¹⁸⁹ The first rulers to combine the various powers of ruler and lama were the Central Tibetan Phagmodru (T. *Phag mo gru*) rulers in the mid-fourteenth century. Illich, "Selections," 257.

previously discussed Mongol martial virtue and Chinese filiality and scholarly accomplishments. Mastery of these abilities depended on the legitimizing/empowering Tibetan institution of the lama-patron relationship (T. *mchod-yon*).¹⁹⁰ This relationship provided the emperor with entrée into advanced forms of tantric practice that, whether or not they elicited paranormal abilities, at least added to the emperor's numinous charisma and may have provided psychological benefits in managing such a complex political role.¹⁹¹

The lama-patron relationship was rooted in Indo-Tibetan ideals of a rulership that balanced secular and sacred domains in order to create political and spiritual harmony in the kingdom, with the temporal ruler as the "patron" and a religious hierarch, responsible for the spiritual welfare of the ruler and the state, as the "lama."¹⁹² In its earlier forms, the relationship was characterized as joint rule, with a ruler responsible for the "wheel of power" (Pali *annacakka*) and the religious establishment, the *sangha*, for the "wheel of Dharma" (Pali *dhammacakka*).¹⁹³ As discussed above, with the rise of the Fifth Dalai Lama, these wheels were combined together.

¹⁹⁰ Also "patron-lama" (T. *yon-mchod*). Wylie glosses the term this way: "*Yon-mchod* is a contraction of (i) *yon-bdag*, "one who gives offerings to a religious person or object," i.e., a patron; and (2) *mchod-gnas*, "an animate or inanimate recipient of religious offerings," e.g., a lama. In a politically oriented *yon-mchod* relationship, the patron provides the military power to enforce the temporal prerogatives of the lama who, in turn, devotes himself to the religious needs of the patron." Turrell V. Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Jun., 1977): 119. See also D. Seyfort Ruegg, "Mchod yon, yon mchod, and mchod gnas/yon gnas: On the Historiography and Semantics of a Tibetan Religio-Social and Religio-political Concept," in Ernst Steinkellner, ed., *Tibetan History and Language* (Wien: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, 1991), 441-453. Ruegg notes that the meaning of the term in earlier Tibetan texts is ambiguous, but by 1346 it clearly refers to the lama-patron relationship as described above. Ruegg, "Mchod yon," 445.

¹⁹¹ The emperor's spiritual charisma was also added to by his practice of Manchu shamanism, a practice that seems to have incorporated deities from both Tibetan Buddhism and the Chinese cult of Guandi. However, the emperor's role in this practice was limited, and not as central to imperial universalist ideology as the roles I have discussed. See Nicola Di Cosmo, "Manchu Shamanic Ceremonies at the Qing Court," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 352-398.

¹⁹² Illich provides a detailed overview of the history of the lama-patron relationship. Illich, "Selections," 182 - 322.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 185-86.

For the Dalai Lamas, hereditary legitimacy derived from their tulku status, and legitimation through Buddhist academic and spiritual attainment, “virtue” in my terms, came from being raised and educated from a young age in a Tibetan Buddhist monastic milieu. However, the two were closely linked: although legitimation through heredity came through tulku status, the tantric techniques in which a tulku might be instructed were believed to “awaken” latent powers to which he was heir as a tulku.

For the Qianlong emperor, not raised in a monastic environment, legitimation through virtue required more concentrated efforts and the assistance of lamas such as Rölpe Dorjé and others who provided initiation and education. Illich argues that:

Allied to these figures [lamas] the Manchu emperors could avail themselves of the *siddhis*, or extraordinary powers, needed to secure a host of worldly and supra-worldly ends— successful military campaigns, controlling droughts or floods, vanquishing unseen malevolent forces, curing illness, deciphering auspicious dates for ritual performance, and so forth. By forging paradigmatic cho-yon [lama-patron] relations, in short, the Emperors could exercise a kind of overarching agency over the cosmos by availing themselves of the powerful Tantric technology of empire that Tibetan Buddhism had to offer.¹⁹⁴

Such technologies, Illich contends, “... transformed [the Qing emperors] from kings or even universal worldly sovereigns into cosmological agents of the highest sort.”¹⁹⁵

Mastery of these Tantric technologies was understood to arise from the study and practice of the most advanced systems of Tibetan Buddhism, the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras (S. *Anuttarayoga Tantra*; T. *bla na med pa'i rgyud*). To begin such practice, when the student is considered properly prepared the instructor performs an initiation or “empowerment” ritual (S. *abhiṣeka*; T. *dbang*), initiating the student into the mandala of the chosen deity. As noted earlier, the mandala is in part conceived of as a palace, and the empowerment ritual is similarly likened

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 181.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 506. Wang provides an anecdote about the emperor that may point to the Qianlong emperor’s practice of *siddhis* even late in his life, when he is reported to have been overheard cursing the leaders of the White Lotus rebellion by chanting incantations (S. *dhāraṇī*; C. *mizhou* 秘咒). Wang, “Tibetan Buddhism,” 318.

to a kingly coronation. According to Davidson, the *Ākravartin* ideal itself is closely intertwined with the mandala principle.¹⁹⁶ He notes that for initiates into advanced Tantric practice:

[T]he central and defining metaphor for mature esoteric Buddhism is that of an individual assuming kingship and exercising dominion. Thus, the understanding of such terms as tantra in Buddhist India would invoke, first and foremost, the idea of hierarchical power acquired and exercised through a combination of ritual and metaphysical means. Based on this power, the varieties of understanding and of personal relationships become subsumed to the purposes of the person metaphorically becoming the overlord (*rājādhirāja*) or the universal ruler (*ākravartin*).¹⁹⁷

Davidson argues that the ritual use of the mandala can in part be understood from a sociological and psychological perspective, and asserts that the internalization of a self-conception as ruler or overlord was “...a Buddhist attempt to sanctify existing public life and recreate the meditator as the controlling personage in the disturbing world of Indic feudal practice.”¹⁹⁸ If we apply this to the case of the initiation of the Qianlong emperor, one of the most powerful rulers of the eighteenth century, one can only assume that the practice was that much more effective if the initiate was the ruler not only metaphorically but in fact, and more so if he were already perceived as a *Ākravartin*.¹⁹⁹ Apart from its psychological benefit and legitimating character, the mandala as space for initiation and transformation also provides entrée into the third and final of the three spheres, the expansive dimension of the macrocosm.

¹⁹⁶ Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 131.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 121. Tucci also notes that the mandala is the palace of the *ākravartin*. Tucci, *Mandala*, 23.

¹⁹⁸ Davidson, *Indian Esoteric*, 131.

¹⁹⁹ Grupper similarly argues for the psychological utility of the mandala initiation (specifically that of Mahākāla for the Yuan emperor Qubilai [Khubilai]): “Its theoretical aim, I suspect, provided focus, direction, and discipline for the Emperor’s mental operations. It specifically endowed him with Mahākāla’s threefold intellect, an indispensable attribute that enabled Qubilai to harmonize the astonishing welter of conflicting interests and contending groups faced daily by the sovereign.” Grupper, “Manchu Imperial Cult,” 60.

Macrocosm: the Cosmological Dimension

In earlier periods of Chinese history for rulers of other non-Chinese “conquest” dynasties such as the Northern Wei, the Liao, the Jin and the Mongols, one benefit Buddhism provided was an ideological system with broader appeal among the peoples of the empire than the more culturally delimited Confucianism that dominated Chinese political discourse. Furthermore, although Confucian thought offered the ideal of *Datong* (大同 “Great Unity”), a utopian society that existed in the mythic past and to which we could return, it was a concept decidedly this-worldly.²⁰⁰ For the Qianlong emperor’s grandiose sense of the imperial role, the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* provided a link to something truly universal, a role that went beyond the delimited somatic and socio-political levels of the first two spheres and expanded into the immeasurable universe of Tibetan Buddhist cosmology.²⁰¹ It suggested a “purpose-driven” rulership with an injunction to immanentize the coming of Maitreya, linking humanity directly to the enlightened realm of buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Because the macrocosm makes up a large part of the inner mandala to be detailed in later chapters, this brief section will simply point to connections between Yonghegong and the mandala, the point of entry to the macrocosm for the tantric practitioner. The macrocosm is the sphere of the most familiar application of the term mandala as a cosmogram, a model of a spiritual universe. However, there is another important role that the mandala plays in tantric

²⁰⁰ Illich, among others, argues that it was the “exclusively Chinese Confucian” character of the Son of Heaven role that made it a less universal role for the Qing rulers, and led them to the broader Buddhist *Ākravartin* role. Illich, “Selections,” 173. Although I generally agree, I would add that Confucian ideals are also not necessarily ethnically exclusive. Like Buddhism, they can be adopted by anyone who learns and practices them, as evidenced by their adoption more widely in East Asia and in Vietnam. However, Buddhism offers a grander vision beyond this world, something perhaps more attractive to the universal emperor.

²⁰¹ Crossley refers to this as “...a heightened sense of the universal ruler’s mission in the world.” Crossley, *Translucent*, 328. Also quoted in Illich, “Selections,” 164, n. 235.

ritual practice: it is a purified space used as a site for initiation into knowledge and experience of the macrocosm, and consequently rebirth and transformation on a spiritual level.²⁰²

Mandala and Transformation

The mandala is a symbol, structure and space associated with transformation, and Yonghegong is a site replete with this symbolism. There we find the transformation of gardens into monasteries, the (re)birth of princes in gardens, the transformation of princes into buddhas and emperors, emperors transforming into bodhisattvas and *Ākravartins*, an empire transforming into a Pure Land. However, Yonghegong had other very explicit connections with the use of mandalas in Tibetan Buddhist initiation rites.

The Ordination Platform Tower was constructed at Yonghegong in 1780 to enclose a multistoried initiation platform for use by the visiting Sixth Panchen Lama. Although such ordination platforms are found at many Buddhist monasteries, this one had particular significance to the Qianlong emperor because it was the platform upon which the emperor himself was given various empowerments/initiation rituals by the visiting lama. This is graphically (microcosmically?) represented at the site today: a lifelike model of the Qianlong emperor in Buddhist attire (modeled on the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portraits) is seated at the top of the platform. (Fig. 103)

Similarly, as I will suggest in a later chapter, the cruciform Hall of the Dharma Wheel, the main ritual hall at Yonghegong, is shaped like the central palace of a standard Indo-Tibetan mandala, and may have been the site for rituals literally centered on the Qianlong emperor in his role as *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*. In this role, the emperor was responsible for creating the conditions on our world to transform into utopia of universal peace and awakening, a Pure Land

²⁰² Tucci, *Mandala*, 44.

on Earth, which would usher in the coming of Maitreya and the universal spread of enlightenment, an expansion symbolized both by the shape of the hall and the unstoppable Dharma Wheel for which it is named.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the three spheres, an interpretive model to aid in understanding the complex array of messages conveyed by the art, architecture and inscriptions at Yonghegong. As a reminder of the Qianlong emperor's physical presence at the site, the microcosm is a fundamental level of significance that points to the site's special, imperial status. The traces of the emperor's words in his texts, his gestures in his calligraphy, and his personal objects all point to the emperor's immanence at the site, much like the presence of Śākyamuni Buddha or other Buddhist luminaries is maintained by their relics, enshrined at Buddhist sites throughout the world. In the second of the three spheres, the mesocosm, I have introduced the general vocabulary of the language of imperial universalism: the various legitimating symbols of rulership utilized by the Qianlong emperor among the key constituencies of the Qing Empire. For the emperor, legitimation as Mongol Great Khan, Chinese Son of Heaven/ Chinese Literatus, and Tibetan *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* came from a combination of factors I have linked to forms of inheritance and virtue. Finally, the emperor as *Ākravartin* provided a connection to Maitreya, the role linking the mesocosm to the macrocosm of Tibetan Buddhist eschatology and the wider Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. Although using the three spheres as a heuristic device may be idiosyncratic, its value lies in its utility in providing a way of viewing the overwhelming complexity of the symbolic world Yonghegong as a whole, and perhaps revitalizing the study of this historically important but somewhat under-appreciated site. So, with the interpretive

structures of outer and inner mandalas and the three spheres established, let us proceed to Yonghegong.

Chapter Four: The Outer Mandala, Part One: Imperial Periphery and Prefatory Courtyard

Although it may be disconcerting to commence this survey of Yonghegong with spaces that no longer exist (the Eastern Academy and the Temple to Guandi), I begin with the imperial periphery for a number of reasons. First, I view the periphery as a Chinese imperial outer shell that covers a Tibetan Buddhist core, and in general at Yonghegong, the symbolic program in both outer and inner mandalas seems to progress from what in Beijing was a more familiar Chinese imperial mode in the architecture, architectural decoration, and sculptural icons to an increasingly less familiar Tibetan Buddhist one as one moves deeper into the site and its interior spaces. Secondly, in Buddhist practice one approaches mandalas from the outside in, making this an appropriate starting point. Finally, as the birthplace of the Qianlong emperor, the most important determining event in the site's history, the Eastern Academy seems the most auspicious place to begin.

Eastern Academy (*Dongshuyuan* 東書院) (1694, sacked 1900, probably removed ca. 1950s)²⁰³

In the latter years of the seventeenth and early decades of the eighteenth centuries, the Eastern Academy was simply the eastern section of the residence of Prince Yong, later the Yongzheng emperor and father of the Qianlong emperor. Although famously studious and hardworking, the prince would have wanted the Eastern Academy understood as a space for

²⁰³ I first presented much of this material related to the Eastern Academy in a public lecture at a symposium titled "Religious and Spiritual Concepts in the Gardens of China," sponsored by the Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens (San Marino, CA) and the University of Oregon on September 24, 2011 at the Huntington.

much-needed relaxation that would allow self-cultivation in a Confucian mode: reading poetry, listening to music, admiring flowers and looking at the moon.²⁰⁴

The garden included some seventy-eight individual buildings, with poetic names evocative of the literati garden culture of the south: Begonia Courtyard (*Haitangyuan* 海棠院), Peaceful Residence (*Pinganju* 平安居), Painted Boat (*Huafang* 畫舫), Drunken Moon Verandah (*Zuiyuexuan* 醉月軒), Hall of Five Blessings (*Wufutang* 五福堂), and Chamber of Wish-fulfillment (*Ruyishi* 如意室), to name a few.²⁰⁵ After Prince Yong acceded to the throne as the Yongzheng emperor in 1722, the site according to precedent could never be used as a residence again. The Eastern Academy was revamped in 1725 as a travelling palace where the emperor and his entourage could rest and prepare for the fifth month summer solstice sacrifices at the Altar to Earth, an important court ritual site just outside of the city walls north of Yonghegong.²⁰⁶

When the Qianlong emperor came to the throne, the functions of the site became more complex. With the conversion of Yonghegong to a monastic college in 1744, the Eastern Academy remained in part a travelling palace, but an ancestral shrine for the Yongzheng emperor was added, probably in the main hall of the garden, the Study of Supreme Harmony (*Taihezhai* 太和齋). After the Qianlong emperor's death, the Chamber of Wish-fulfillment became his own ancestral shrine.²⁰⁷ Later Qing emperors came here every year during the anniversary of his death on the third day of the first month and on the thirteenth day of the eighth month to remember his birthday. After the fifth month summer solstice sacrifices at the Altar to

²⁰⁴ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 262. For more on the idea of gardens as spaces for Confucian self-cultivation, see John Makeham, "The Confucian Role of Names in Traditional Chinese Gardens," *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 187-210.

²⁰⁵ The names are from Niu, *Yonghegong*, 268; the number of buildings from Lai and Chang, "Yung-ho Temple," 137.

²⁰⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 214.

²⁰⁷ Chen Guantao 陈观涛, ed., *Huashuo Yonghegong* 话说雍和宫 ("Accounts of Yonghegong") (Beijing: Zong jiao wen hua chu ban she, 2002) 26.

Earth, the later emperors laid offerings before the Qianlong emperor's portrait in a ritual called "sacrificing the new" (*jianxin* 荐新). Another tradition after the summer sacrifices was to eat sesame mixed noodles (*zhima banmian* 芝麻拌麵) and other delicacies in the Study of Supreme Harmony as part of vegetarian fasting.²⁰⁸ In 1900, the Eastern Academy was reportedly burned and looted by Japanese troops during the chaos of the Boxer Uprising. After that, the site seems to have fallen into decay, and it was probably removed in the 1950s to make way for later construction projects that included educational facilities and dormitories for monks.

Description

Although the Eastern Academy was sacked in 1900, it seems to have been relatively intact, if dilapidated, in the early twentieth century, based on descriptions by Western visitors who referred to it as the Yonghegong "Library."²⁰⁹ These descriptions, along with the earlier site plan from the 1750 map and textual descriptions of the site from court records, can help to create a sense of what it might have been like as a physical space. However, these materials present a number of challenges. First, the texts that name and describe the locations of the buildings at the Eastern Academy are somewhat imprecise and are sometimes contradictory. Second, the 1750 map shows the garden predating a major renovation in Qianlong 27 (ca. 1763), and some of the seeming mismatch between the map and the later descriptions may simply be because the site was modified.²¹⁰ Another interesting point of reference, useful as a document of the period, is a painting in the well-known series of Qianlong-era paintings of Yuanmingyuan that shows a section of that garden very similar in plan and buildings to the Eastern Academy. Recognizing

²⁰⁸ Lai and Chang, "Yung-ho Temple," 137.

²⁰⁹ See for example Juliet Bredon, *Peking* (Hong Kong: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982 [1919]), 183; L[ewis] C[harles] Arlington and William Lewisohn, *In Search of Old Peking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 194-5.

²¹⁰ Lai and Chang, "Yung-ho Temple," 136.

the tenuous nature of this evidence, I will attempt to describe the Eastern Academy in the eighteenth century.

I will begin with a court history *Guochao Gongshi Xubian* 過朝宮史續編 (“Sequel to a History of the Qing Court,” 1800), which is of course more concerned with recording the “imperishable” parts of the site, namely the imperial inscriptions that were once on display on carved plaques or in works of ink calligraphy.²¹¹ However, this text also provides some brief descriptions of the site, primarily relative locations of the structures within. The Eastern Academy, like Yonghegong, was laid out in three north-south sections, with main halls on the axes. These were flanked by long, straight covered corridors extending north-south, as well as similarly long, more robust walled buildings with gabled roofs known as *chaofang* 朝房. Courtyards were also connected east west by similar structures.

At the southernmost end was a large, long rockery constructed by specialist craftsmen from the south, and extending the width of the Eastern Academy.²¹² The basic layout above is clearly indicated in the 1750 map. The rockery seems to block easy access to the garden, requiring movement around it or using a narrow passage through it. This use of a rockery to create “conceal and reveal” experience seems to have been a popular design technique in gardens constructed for the Qianlong emperor,²¹³ and is something famously described in the eighteenth-century novel the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the vast garden in which may have been based on

²¹¹ “Guochao Gongshi Xubian” 過朝宮史續編, *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書, v. 657 (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1987) 657-342 – 657-343.

²¹² Niu, Yonghegong, 213.

²¹³ For example, in the rockery just inside the main gate (“Gate of Spreading Auspiciousness,” *Yanqimen* 衍祺門) of the “Qianlong Garden” (a.k.a. “The Garden of the Palace of Tranquil Longevity,” *Ningshougong huayuan* 寧壽宮花園, 1776), and in the rockery leading up to the Pavilion of Literature Overflowing (Wenjingge 文津閣, 1775) at the Summer Retreat in Chengde.

Qianlong-era imperial gardens.²¹⁴ Although not indicated on the 1750 map, the rockery in later descriptions included a pavilion called the Bewinged Pavilion (*Yiranting* 翼然亭), the name suggesting its placement at the heights of the rockery like similar examples in the Qianlong-era gardens of the Forbidden City.²¹⁵

Following the 1750 map, all of the roofs in the garden seem to have been simple gabled, or hip and gabled, humpback-rafter style roofs (*juanpengding* 卷棚頂), the roof smoothly arcing over the top without the ridge spine seen on the more formal hipped or hip-and gable style roof seen in the main area of Yonghegong. These sorts of roofs would have been appropriate to secondary-ranked structures like those in the Eastern Academy. Although sources differ, the arrangement of the main garden buildings in the early twentieth century seems to have been as follows.²¹⁶ After passing through a small gate and the rockery, one found the first major hall, the Peaceful Residence, a sizeable, five-bay hall. To its north was the Chamber of Wish-fulfillment, a slightly smaller five-bay hall, and north again was the Study of Supreme Harmony.

In the eastern section of the garden was the Hall of Five Blessings, to the northeast of which was a terrace used for moon-viewing and theatrical performances. Other structures are more difficult to place but included a Painted Boat (*Huafang* 畫舫), a type of structure popular in southern gardens, long covered corridors along the sides, another large terrace called Great Tract

²¹⁴ The text describes a massive rockery just inside the main gate of the garden, blocking any view of the interior. Characters in the novel then comment favorably on this design choice. “‘Without this hill,’ Jia Zheng somewhat otiosely observed, ‘the whole garden would be visible as one entered, and all its mystery would be lost.’ The literary gentlemen concurred. ‘Only a master of the art of landscape could have conceived so bold a stroke,’ said one of them.” Cao Xueqin, *The Story of the Stone* (or *The Dream of the Red Chamber*) Vol. 1, trans. David Hawkes (London: Penguin Books, 1973) 327.

²¹⁵ I am referring specifically to the Belvedere of Abundant Greenery (*Jicuiting* 积翠亭) in the Garden of the Palace of Established Happiness (*Jianfugong huayuan* 建福宮花園, 1742, rebuilt 2006), and the two pavilions in the “Qianlong Garden,” the Pavilion of Soaring Beauty (*Songxiuting* 聳休亭) and the Pavilion of the Jade-green Conch (*Biluoting* 碧螺亭). See Nancy Berliner, ed., *The Emperor's Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City* (Salem, Mass: Peabody Essex Museum, 2010), and May Holdsworth, *The Palace of Established Happiness: Restoring a Garden in the Forbidden City* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 2008).

²¹⁶ For the basic arrangement of the named buildings, I am following Arlington and Lewison, *In Search of*, 194-95, checked against the QLCQT map.

Essay (*Da Kuai Wenzhang* 大塊文章), as well as other smaller structures that cannot be specifically identified. In the western section was the Begonia Courtyard (*Haitangyuan* 海棠院), which the map shows as an area similar to the central section with three halls in a north-south row, however, not strictly centered on the axis like the central halls. The rear halls of the Eastern Academy included long *chaofang*, some multistoried structures such as the Rear Buddha Tower (*Hou Fo Lou* 后佛楼), and other buildings used for religious purposes.²¹⁷

A site with interesting similarities to the plan of the Eastern Academy is a section of Yuanmingyuan called “Diligent Government and Deference to the Virtuous” (*Qínzhèng Qīnxián* 勤政親賢).²¹⁸ Images of it survive in two painted forms preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.²¹⁹ (Fig. 70, from the “Forty Views” series, and Fig. 71 from Siren’s *Imperial Palaces of Peking*) Like the Eastern Academy, Diligent Government and Deference to the Virtuous was located to the east of a more formal arrangement of palaces, in this case the main ceremonial halls of Yuanmingyuan known collectively as “Righteousness and Clarity” (*Zheng Da Guang Ming* 正大光明). It served a function probably similar to that of the Eastern Academy when it was the residence of Prince Yong: an informal space for the conducting of affairs, as well as eating daily meals and relaxing.²²⁰

The plan of the site was also roughly similar to the plan of the Eastern Academy shown in the 1750 map. It had a similar collection of three rather formal, north-south oriented

²¹⁷ Arlington and Lewisohn note a number of Buddhist halls that enshrined various Esoteric *yab-yum* deities, as well as a Daoist altar to the Pole-star Deity. Arlington and Lewisohn, *In Search of*, 195.

²¹⁸ Names for sections of the Yuanmingyuan follow the poetic names given to the sections by the Qianlong emperor in his “Forty Views” (*Sishi jing* 四十景, 1744).

²¹⁹ The set of paintings from the “Forty Views” series is reproduced in Che Bing Chiu and Gilles B. Berthier, *Yuanming Yuan: Le Jardin De La Clarté Parfaite* (Besançon: Editions de l'Imprimeur, 2000); the other image is from Osvald Sirén, *The Imperial Palaces of Peking: Two Hundred and Seventy Four Plates in Collotype After the Photographs by the Author: Twelve Architectural Drawings and Two Maps with a Short Historical Account* (New York: AMS Press, 1976) pl. 177.

²²⁰ Wong, *Paradise*, 28.

courtyards, with three larger halls in the central section and smaller halls in the courtyards to the sides. The main buildings in the “Forty Views” painting have the humpback-rafter style roof. The site also has long, straight covered corridors extending north-south and east west and connecting the courtyards, as well as similar chaofang. Most intriguing, though, is the presence in the Siren painting of a long rockery in the southernmost courtyard of the site, similar to the one in the Eastern Academy.²²¹ (Fig. 71) These similarities suggest that the Diligent Government and Deference to the Virtuous section, completed in 1726, may have been inspired by the earlier Eastern Academy, providing for the Yongzheng emperor a familiar space, with an arrangement of similar structures in a place having a similar function, when he made Yuanmingyuan his primary residence beginning in 1726.²²²

The Eastern Academy and the Three Spheres

Shifting attention now from the physical spaces of the Eastern Academy and back to the symbolic domain and the Three Spheres, I will first highlight aspects of the Eastern Academy that can be associated with the microcosm, the somatic sphere, and the mesocosm, or socio-political sphere. In the Eastern Academy, the microcosm would have had particular significance because of all of the specific connections of this section with the emperor’s physical presence: the Chamber of Wish-fulfillment that was his birthplace and later shrine; the private, familial space that such gardens often connoted; the name of the site, and its association with the

²²¹ The lack of the rockery in the Forty Views painting may simply be to improve the painting’s composition. The Siren painting includes the entire southern courtyard with the rockery, whereas the Forty Views version cuts off in the middle of this courtyard. Perhaps the painters chose to remove the rockery to provide a cleaner frame, and avoid an overly busy lower portion. The court artists of the series took dramatic liberties with the surroundings of the various scenes, often placing them in fantasy settings of elaborate, fanciful rockeries or blue and green landscapes that were not at the original site. The Siren painting, however, does have a curious discrepancy. It consistently renders the roofs of the buildings with sharp roof ridges, whereas the Forty Views version renders them with humpback roofs, a more appropriate type in the Qing court architectural hierarchy.

²²² Wong, *Paradise*, 74-5.

emperor's youthful studies; and most directly through the emperor's writings that reference the Eastern Academy, some of which were recorded as being on display there. Because of the destruction of the Eastern Academy, the inscriptions only survive in documentary form, recorded in collections of the Qianlong emperor's writings and in court histories. Therefore, somewhat ironically, the part of Yonghegong that may have had the deepest microcosmic significance, representing the emperor's physical presence, only survives in textual form.

Most of the emperor's writings displayed in steles and panels at Yonghegong, and many of the poems that reference the Eastern Academy, reflect the formality of imperial stele pronouncements and erudite proclamations of Buddhist faith. However, some of the recorded writings that reference the Eastern Academy are expressed in the most informal and self-referential tone of any Yonghegong inscriptions. This tone is particularly pronounced in the poetry about the Chamber of Wish-fulfillment. Although the topics and themes used in the recorded writings of both the Qianlong and Yongzheng emperors on the Eastern Academy vary, with countless Confucian, literary and Buddhist references, I have chosen the following examples to emphasize the tone of nostalgia, impermanence, consciousness of duty and even loneliness that connect most directly with the microcosm. The following were written in the later decades of the Qianlong period, the last from his final year of official reign.²²³

Personal Reflections on the Chamber of Wish-fulfillment 聖制如意室述懷, Written by the Emperor, Qianlong 29 (1764-65)²²⁴

²²³ A few examples are provided in Niu, Yonghegong, 268-270, and in Ma Lan 馬蘭, "Qianlong yu Yonghegong de shiyuan he foyuan" 乾隆與雍和宮的詩緣和佛緣 ("The Qianlong Emperor's Poetic and Buddhist Affinities for Yonghegong") *Zoujin Yonghegong* 走近雍和宮 ("Entering Yonghegong"), ed. Yonghegong Administration Department (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1999), 53-57. No specific sources are provided for the poems.

²²⁴ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 268.

此室幼居曾，偶來感弗勝。
無端夕陽裏，不覺歲年增。
牆見真徒語，庭趨那再能。
踟躕緬如意，可未負丕承。

I lived in this room once while young, sudden feelings overwhelm me.

In the boundless setting sun, unconscious of age slipping by.

Seeing the true disciple's words on the wall, how can I hear my father's instructions again?

I hesitate, recalling Wish-fulfillment: can I live up to the burden I have inherited?

*A Poem on the Chamber of Wish-fulfillment, Written by the Emperor, ca. 1770s.*²²⁵

邸地吾生長，今來忽六旬。
昔年景頻憶，先節敬應申。
砌下花新錦，庭前松老鱗。
緬懷趨訓日，黯而獨傷神。

In this mansion I was raised, suddenly six decades passed.

Reflecting frequently upon former times, extending necessarily my respect to previous lessons.

Under the steps, flowers with new blossoms; in front of the hall, pines with old scales.

Longing for those faraway days of tutelage, my spirit aches in sullen solitude.

Poem on First Month Worship at Yonghegong 聖制新正雍和宮瞻禮詩, Written by the

Emperor, Qianlong 56 (1791)²²⁶

龍飛參舊邸，象教叩新禧。
雍若春生矣，和兮物識之。
貞元轉鴻運，顧復溯烏私。
來每逢人日，成人本在茲。

²²⁵ Ma, "Qianlong," 53. No source, date or title provided.

²²⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 265.

The dragon alights to pay his respects to his old estate, as if the New Year were knocking.

Harmonious,²²⁷ as if spring-born; peaceful! and all things know it.

The auguries first revealed a fortunate destiny; recalling my upbringing and the bonds of filial piety.

Each time I come on *renri*²²⁸, I remember becoming an adult here.

Poem on First Month Worship at Yonghegong to Instruct the Imperial Princes 聖制新正

雍和宮瞻禮示諸皇子詩, Written by the Emperor, Qianlong 60 (1795)²²⁹

躍龍宮自我生初，七歲從師始讀書。
廿五登基考承命，六十歸政祖欽予。
月長日引勗無逸，物阜民安愧有餘。
深信天恩錫符望，永言題壁示聽諸。

From the palace of the leaping dragon I was born; at seven I began my studies.

At twenty-five I ascended the throne, the mandate passed on by my father; at sixty I relinquished the power my ancestors had granted me.

More and more over time I encouraged myself not to live in leisure; I humbly note that peace and plenty abound.

With deep faith in Heaven for bestowing such honor, forever let these words be written on the wall to instruct you all.

Of course, the medium, the message and the architectural context of even these most “personal” inscriptions are all firmly anchored in the world of the Chinese scholar, and therefore resonate strongly in the mesocosm, or socio-political sphere. The Jiangnan cultural heartland of the Chinese literati inspired the space: a southern-style residential garden that once surely

²²⁷ Harmonious (*yong* 雍), with “peaceful” (*he* 和) in the next line, is a play on the site’s name, Yonghegong 雍和宮.

²²⁸ The seventh day of the first lunar month.

²²⁹ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 266.

displayed the smooth blending of the “five elements” of garden design: water, rocks, plants, architecture and culture (*wen* 文). In this setting, humanity and an ‘educated’ or ‘domesticated’ nature interpenetrated conceptually and physically, an elegant synthesis creating a cultivated world that inspired self-cultivation.

This self-cultivation is evoked by the name ‘Eastern Academy,’ a place for the study of the classical texts and poetry that are referenced throughout the names of places and other inscriptions once found in the site. In the poetry above, the frequent filial references to the emperor’s memories of his parents and his father’s instruction and example are very clearly Confucian. Other inscriptions trumpet the emperor’s familiarity with the great poets of Chinese literary history. Niu provides annotation for a number of the four-character inscriptions originally on plaques in the Eastern Academy.

(... The inscription) “the window contains distant forms” (窗含遠色) in the Eastern Bedroom of the Study of Supreme Harmony will easily bring to mind the famous line by the great Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 [712-770]: “the window contains the thousand-autumn snow of Xiling; the door anchors the ten thousand-*li* distant boats of Dong Wu” (窗含西嶺千秋雪，門泊東吳萬里船); and the inscription plaque “the clear light amuses people” (清暉娛人), apart from reminding people of the famous *ci* 詞 “Remembering Su Che on the Mid-Autumn Festival” (水調歌頭 “中秋”) by Su Shi 蘇軾 [1037-1101], it also can remind (us) of the immortal poetic epitome: “The bright moon rises from the sea; within the bounds of the heavens, we share this moment 海上升明月，天涯共此時.”²³⁰ Furthermore, the plaque “Great Tract Essay” (大塊文章) will remind people of a line by Dai Fugu 戴復古 [1167-1248], an itinerant scholar at the end of Song Dynasty who never become an official, and who expressed his state of mind in this moving expression: “laughter clamors forth from white stones and clear springs, essays emerge from deep mountains and vast marshes” 白石清泉喧笑語，深山大澤出文章.²³¹

²³⁰ The line is from Zhang Jiuling 張九齡 (673-740) “Looking at the Moon and Thinking of One Far Away” 望月懷遠.

²³¹ From the poem “Zhegui Monastery” (*Zheguisi* 折桂寺).

From the allusion-heavy world of the literati we turn to the realm of Buddhist symbolism. I associate the Eastern Academy with the macrocosm on the strength of the site's status as a garden, and the importance of gardens and garden-like imagery in the Buddhist tradition. These associations again begin with the birth of Prince Hongli in the Eastern Academy, but only after the prince's later transformation into the Qianlong emperor could the potential, albeit retroactive, Buddhist interpretations of his birth arise. To begin with, both the emperor and Śākyamuni Buddha were princes born in gardens, later transforming into the powerful, world-transforming figures of emperor and buddha. Such transformation is emphasized in the previously noted "Third-day Tub" used to bathe the infant Hongli, but there is another level of interpretation that fits here. A basin carved with dragons in a Chinese context symbolized hopes that the young imperial prince might later mount the dragon throne himself, transforming like the lowly carp into a dragon. However, in a Buddhist context a basin decorated with dragons used to bathe an infant certainly also evoked the dragons that arose from the earth to lustrate the infant Siddhartha in Lumbinī, his garden-like birthplace.²³²

Although the associations above are my own, the Qianlong emperor himself provides other Buddhist garden associations in his 1744 inaugural stele inscription of the Yonghegong Monastery. First, he links the transformation of Yonghegong into a monastery to an event in Buddhist history: the transformation of Jetakumāra's garden into the Jetavana Monastery (*Zhilin* 祇林), one of the most important early Buddhist monasteries.²³³ This site, like Yonghegong, was donated to the Saṅgha as a seasonal residence and place for teaching. This particular association factors strongly in my designation of the long wooded pathway and monastic residences on the

²³² These dragons were of course *nāgas*, the South Asian serpent-deities in their original context, transformed into the more familiar dragons in China.

²³³ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 10.

southern end of the axis of Yonghegong as the “Garden Section.” Another garden reference also appears later in the 1744 inscription: the Deer Park (*Luyuan* 鹿苑), the site of Śākyamuni Buddha’s First Sermon, a reference in the stele inscription that not only links the Eastern Academy with this earlier place of teaching and learning, but also continues the associations between Śākyamuni and the Yongzheng emperor, a recurring theme of the text.²³⁴ Another possible garden association from the life of Śākyamuni is Upavattana, the Sāla-grove of the Mallas in Kushinagar, the garden that was the place of Śākyamuni’s death. As I will argue below, one of the inscriptions on the ceremonial gates, or *pailou*, at the entrance to Yonghegong may reference this site. This would make a final emperor-buddha connection, between the site of the death of Śākyamuni and the site where the Yongzheng emperor was temporarily interred before burial and where his memorial shrine was located.

A last Buddhist garden association we might connect with Yonghegong has to do with the setting surrounding many images of bodhisattvas such as Maitreya and of the arhats, often shown in natural settings reminiscent of Chinese gardens or imperial palace-gardens. Some of the earliest Chinese Buddhist images of Maitreya Bodhisattva represent the deity as seated in a garden-like space, often surrounded by stylized ginkgo trees. (Fig. 72) This imagery is designed to evoke the Tuṣita Heaven, often described and represented in various media (particularly in Tibetan Buddhist art) as a space of gardens and palaces much like Yonghegong in its heyday. Similarly represented in garden settings are the arhats who await Maitreya’s arrival, often portrayed in Qing court art in resplendent blue, green and gold sylvan settings, or in rockery-like grottoes that represent the secret, mountain sanctuaries where they are in retreat, protecting the Buddhist teachings. (Fig. 73)

²³⁴ Ibid., 11.

From associations with birth, study, death, and rebirth, the macrocosmic dimension of the Eastern Academy provides a neat-and-tidy cycle of symbolic associations, Crossley's "reinforcing images, allusions, and resonances," of a type that may have been irresistible to the Qianlong emperor, if not explicitly stated in the way that I have presented it. Perhaps more so than in any other section of Yonghegong, the Eastern Academy provided clear examples of the symbolic vocabulary of the all of the Three Spheres, from the textual remnants of the Qianlong emperor's personal history and lasting presence there, to the proud display of Qing imperial mastery of the world of the Chinese literati, and finally to the implicit Buddhist associations that such a garden may have also provided. The Eastern Academy, domain of Chinese literati culture, the realm of *wen*, was balanced on the west by a space dedicated to the realm of *wu*, or martial culture, the Temple to Guandi.

The Temple to Guandi (*Guandimiao* 關帝廟), The Temple of the Lord (*Laoyemiao* 老爺廟), The Western Side Compound (*Xikuayuan* 西跨院) (ca. 1750-1950s)

The Temple to Guandi was a separate temple compound outside of the northwest wall of the main ritual core of Yonghegong.²³⁵ (Fig. 10) It was dedicated to Guandi 關帝 ("Emperor Guan"), the euhemerized third-century general Guan Yu (關羽, d. 219) who is often described as the Chinese God of War, but whose roles are more varied and complex. Although a separate temple with its own southern entranceway, it was also accessible from the main site by a passageway through the Yamantaka Tower, dedicated to another fierce deity, in Courtyard VII. The Temple to Guandi was the last major physical space added to Yonghegong, and, among

²³⁵ Description based on Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 182-4; Wei, *Yonghegong manlu*, 65-67. Measurements from the Merchers plan.

other things, it provided the symbolic military component in the imperial periphery. However, architecturally the site seems almost like an afterthought, jutting awkwardly into the major street on the west side of Yonghegong and blocking the smooth flow of traffic. It may have been for this reason that the site was removed, probably during the reconstruction of Yonghegong and wider modernization of Beijing in the early 1950s. Therefore, like the Eastern Academy, the lost Temple to Guandi must be reconstructed from surviving records and contemporary descriptions.

The 1750 QLJCQT map shows an earlier Guandi temple, the Fumomiao 伏魔廟 (“Demon Queller Temple”),²³⁶ directly across the street from the later location of the Temple to Guandi. (Fig. 8) The map shows a small compound with two small courtyards and four single-story, gable-roofed buildings, decidedly more humble than the later Temple to Guandi. The shorthand rendering of average buildings used on the map makes the temple indistinguishable from the other nearby courtyard compounds. It is only outstanding by being named, and, more interestingly, by the fact that it juts out prominently into the large street next to Yonghegong, much like the Temple to Guandi would later do from the other side of the street.

An Imperial Household Department record dated Qianlong 15, second lunar month, 21st day (March 28, 1750) describes what must be the construction of the Temple to Guandi in its later form.²³⁷ Although it does not mention the name of the temple, it notes the construction of a temple on the west side of Yonghegong, and lists the buildings as a Main Gate, or Mountain Gate (*shanmen* 山門, 3 bays), a Main Hall (*dadian* 大殿, 3 bays), two Side Halls (*peidian* 配殿, probably 3 bays each, but not listed), a Rear Hall (*houdian* 後殿, 5 bays) and two rear Shunshan (“mountain according”) Buildings (*shunshan fang* 順山房, probably 2 bays each, but not listed),

²³⁶ Demon Queller was one of the forms of Guandi. Naquin, *Peking*, 36.

²³⁷ Lai and Chang, “Yung-ho Temple,” 136. The record reads “...西邊修建廟宇內山門一座，山門三間，大殿三間，前簷接蓋抱廈一間，配殿兩座，後殿五間，順山房兩座。” I suspect that the 1750 QLJCQT map was based on earlier surveys that did not include the Temple of Guandi in its later form, constructed in March of that year.

a total of seven buildings and roughly 21 bays. A later record from 1763 refers specifically to the Temple to Guandi outside the west wall as having seven buildings with a total of 21 bays, a number that accords both with the buildings listed in the 1750 record above, and with the detailed ground plan of the temple in the early twentieth century provided in Lessing's *Yung-ho-kung*.²³⁸

Description

Based on these records and descriptions and plan from the early twentieth century we can describe the temple as follows. The temple complex was separated from the main Yonghegong complex by a space of about twelve meters, and was enclosed by a wall roughly sixty-seven meters north-south and forty-three meters east-west. If one accessed the site through the rear of the Yamantaka Tower, the visitor entered an enclosed, twelve meters-square passageway, descended two or three meters, down a flight of stairs,²³⁹ through a small, three-bay wide gateway, down another short flight of stairs and through an opening in the compound's wall. This opened into the main courtyard of the temple, which could also be accessed from the south after passing through a small gate and a very narrow courtyard.

The main courtyard was the largest in the compound and included four structures: the Hall of the Heavenly Kings (*Tianwangdian* 天王殿) on the south side, three bays (roughly twelve meters) east west, and one bay (roughly five meters) deep; the Eastern Side Hall (*Dong peidian* 東配殿) and the Western Side Hall (*Xi peidian* 西配殿), roughly the same dimensions as the Hall of the Heavenly Kings but oriented east-west and facing in towards the courtyard.

²³⁸ Ibid., 137. I suspect that the building originally designated as the Mountain Gate was later revamped as the Hall of Heavenly Kings, and a smaller Mountain Gate was built, as shown on the plan in Wei, *Yonghegong manlu*, but missing from the Melchers plan, perhaps having disintegrated.

²³⁹ Elevation from Wei, *Yonghegong manlu*, 65.

Western sources identify these buildings as the Guest Hall (*Ketang* 客堂, on the east) and the Meditation Hall (*Chantang* 禪堂, on the west).²⁴⁰ The fourth, and largest, structure in the courtyard was the Bodhisattva Hall (*Pusadian* 菩薩殿), three bays (roughly thirteen meters) east west and one bay (roughly eight meters) deep, with a small, one bay (four meter) square portico. This Bodhisattva Hall may have been built to replace a hall of the same name that was removed from the rear courtyard of the ritual core to make way for the Pavilion of Myriad Blessings.

The rear courtyard was entered through the Bodhisattva Hall or through the small openings to either side. Like the rear courtyard (Courtyard VIII) in the main Yonghegong site, the north side of this courtyard was a long line of connected buildings. The central building was the Hall of Guandi (*Guandidian* 關帝殿), five bays (twenty meters) wide and one bay (six meters) deep, with a short verandah bay. To either side were attached, subsidiary structures, the Eastern and Western Shunshan Buildings (*Dong, Xi shunshan fang* 東, 西順山房), three bays (nine meters) wide and one bay (six meters) deep. Connecting the rear of the Bodhisattva Hall and the front of the Hall of Guandi was a platform twelve meters east-west by seven meters north-south. Although commonly called a *yuetai* 月台 (“moon terrace”), in an imperial context this platform is more properly called a *danchi* 丹墀 (“vermilion terrace”). Normally in a palace a *danchi* is a red-painted stone platform that was built in front of the main hall in a palace, and was reached by a long flight of steps called the *danbi* 丹陛 (“vermilion steps”). At Yonghegong, the *danchi* in the Temple to Guandi and in the Palace Section of the ritual core act as a raised platform that connects important temple buildings. At the center of the *danchi* in the Temple to Guandi there was a large, bronze incense burner, probably very similar to the one in the Palace Section.

²⁴⁰ Bouillard, *Le Temple*, ground plan, n.p.; Arlington and Lewisohn, *In Search of*, 192-3.

Much less information survives about the interiors of these halls. Jin provides a sketchy overview of what major statues were enshrined in the halls, as well as a few tantalizing lines about paintings once on display. Inside the Bodhisattva Hall were statues of three major bodhisattvas: Avalokiteśvara, riding on a *hou* 狻 (a mythical, lion-like creature), Mañjuśrī, riding on a lion, and Samantabhadra, riding on an elephant. Jin also notes red-line (*zhumiao* 朱描) drawings of arhats on the east and west walls of the hall. The main image in the Hall of Guandi was a bronze, seated image of Guandi, flanked by six attendants on each side. Lessing notes a high fence inside that screened off the “stable” of Guandi’s horse from the rest of the interior, suggesting that the horse, a standard part of Guandi iconography, was also present as a sculpture.²⁴¹

The Temple to Guandi and the Three Spheres

Guandi was a Chinese deity with broad appeal throughout extremely diverse populations, and he served the faithful in a variety of roles.²⁴² Best known as a heroic warrior, and represented with a fierce, red visage, armor-clad and with his characteristic *guandao* 關刀 (“Guan’s blade”, an immense, glaive-like pole-arm), his role as a protector is unsurprising. Guan Yu was also renowned for his loyalty, later inspiring dedication to Guandi by both merchants (dependent on contractual obligations), who conflated him with the god of wealth, and by members of secret societies (dependent on mutual trust and confidentiality) at various points on the spectrum from revolutionary to criminal. Perhaps most surprisingly, Guandi had such wide appeal and multivalent potential that he was a deity promoted both by antigovernment rebel

²⁴¹ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 17.

²⁴² Duara, “Superscribing Symbols,” 782.

groups and by the imperial state.²⁴³ His rising popularity and his value to the state is demonstrated by his regular promotions, from duke (*gong* 公) to prince (*wang* 王) to emperor (*di* 帝), as he was granted official titles over the centuries.²⁴⁴

Prasenjit Duara, in a study of the diversity of Guandi worship, notes that the variable roles of the deity represent not an *either-or* but a *both-and* phenomena, a superscription of symbolic values that made the deity highly valuable to the state.

It is clear that all dynasties from the Song until the Qing sought to superscribe the images of Guandi and thus to appropriate his symbolism for their own ends, yet deliberately or not these earlier dynasties actually promoted the worship of Guandi in his different aspects and encouraged the different interpretations.²⁴⁵

Duara also notes,

The state could not, and in most cases did not even seek to, erase local versions of the gods; rather, it sought to draw on their symbolic power even while it established its dominance over them.²⁴⁶

This superscription was carried even further by the Qing court, who added to the preexisting range of Guandi roles those that had appeal beyond the Chinese cultural sphere. The court encouraged conflation of Guandi with the popular Tibetan legendary hero King Geser, who, like Guandi, also served as a god of wealth, in the case of Geser as a form of Vaiśravaṇa, Heavenly King of the North and Buddhist wealth god.²⁴⁷ King Geser was popular among Tibetan and Mongol groups, and on a political level, Guandi's association with loyalty and brotherhood was seen as encouraging Mongol loyalty, much like Qing support of the Gelug order, and the court built numerous temples to him in the Mongolian borderlands.²⁴⁸ Further

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Duara, 783.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Among the Outer Mongolians in the eighteenth century, Guandi was also associated with a shamanistic deity, Da lha, or Dayičin tngri, one of the Five Spirits of Destiny that protected individuals from birth. Patricia A. Berger, and Terese T. Bartholomew, *Mongolia: The Legacy of Chinggis Khan* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995) 228.

²⁴⁸ Berger, *Empire*, 118, citing Heissig.

linkage to Tibetan war deities is provided by the physical linkage to the temple through the Yamantaka Tower, a connection that may have been practical as well as symbolic, providing easier access to the separate temple complex.

At Yonghegong, Guandi was a part of regular services at the monastery. Lessing noted the regular appearance of Guandi among the numerous painted thangkas hanging in the two halls he exhaustively catalogued. In 1931, he also witnessed the importance of Guandi in one of the rites he observed in the Gate of Harmony and Peace, where the deity appeared in a group with four Tibetan protector deities as part of a rite devoted to Tsongkhapa.²⁴⁹ Annual rites devoted specifically to Guandi were performed at the monastery from the Yongzheng period through 1911,²⁵⁰ and daily rites were certainly performed at the Temple to Guandi after its construction in around 1750. Although the temple no longer exists at Yonghegong, a large wooden sculpture of the deity is enshrined today in the Yamantaka Hall that once acted as a gateway to the Temple to Guandi out of the west wall of the rear courtyard of the ritual core.

From the macrocosmic and mesocosmic significance of Guandi to his microcosmic importance, Berger highlights the deity's personal significance to Yonghegong's other important designer, Rolpay Dorje, a significance that arose from the lama's visionary experiences.²⁵¹ On two important occasions, recorded in his biography, Rolpay Dorje had visions of a red-faced giant who was later determined to be Guandi. The first was during the crucial transitional period in 1735 after the death of the Yongzheng emperor, when Guandi appeared to Rolpay Dorje during his return journey from Tibet to the capital, and promised to be his protector.²⁵² The second was later during a serious illness, when Guandi again appeared to drive off the negative

²⁴⁹ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 52-55.

²⁵⁰ Berger, *Empire*, 119. Rites were held on the thirteenth day of the fifth lunar month.

²⁵¹ Berger recounts them from the Rolpay Dorje's biography. Berger, *Empire*, 119.

²⁵² Tuguan, *Zhangjia*, 130-31.

forces, perceived in divination as large spiders, causing the lama's affliction.²⁵³ This personal significance was perhaps instrumental in making Guandi an important presence at Yonghegong, and leading to the construction of the unusually placed Temple to Guandi compound.

Courtyard I: Pailou Courtyard (*Pailouyuan* 牌楼院)

From the balanced domains of *wen* and *wu*, the Temple to Guandi and the Eastern Academy, that together make up the imperial periphery, we turn now to the ritual core of Yonghegong. Our movement through the outer mandala will now proceed much as a modern visitor might experience the site, from south to north and through a succession of courtyards and buildings. We will begin with Courtyard I, the Pailou Courtyard, which acts as a kind of preface to the site as a whole. Both the inscriptions, which introduce some of the key messages of Yonghegong, and the architecture of the formal gateways in the courtyard make fluent use of the language of imperial symbolism.

The main entrance to Yonghegong is at the southernmost end of the west wall. It is a simple opening, just wide enough for one vehicle to pass through, with large, red, square gateposts topped with grey tiled roofs and a red metal gate. The relative simplicity of the gate contrasts with the dramatic sight just visible within, rising above the west wall of the courtyard and slightly obscured by trees: the Western Ceremonial Gateway, henceforth the West Pailou (*Xi pailou* 西寶坊). (Fig. 74) Passing through the narrow gate, we enter the first courtyard of the site.

Courtyard I, the Pailou Courtyard, is an area of approximately seventy meters east-west and thirty-three meters north-south. It acts both a spectacular prelude and thematic preface to the

²⁵³ Ibid., 145-46. In the vision, the red-faced hero is described as carrying a jeweled sword (寶劍), not a *guandao*, making him more reminiscent of another dream-demon chasing deity, Zhong Kui 鍾馗 the Demon-queller.

symbolic program of the site through the monumental, ceremonial gateways known as *pailou* 牌樓, their decorative programs, and their inscriptions.²⁵⁴ These *pailou*, dating to the 1744 reconstruction, are on the north, west and east sides of the courtyard. In traditional Chinese contexts, *pailou* designate significant spaces physically and, through the inscription panels (*e'ti* 額題 or *bianwen* 匾文), conceptually. Such inscriptions tie sites to the ever-present, parallel universe of Chinese literary culture, imbuing physical spaces with cultural significance through naming or inscribed commentary. Because such inscriptions can be recorded and preserved in the literary record, they can continue to exist long after the structure they were created for has disappeared, something Cary Liu refers to as the “imperishable quality of words.”²⁵⁵

In Chinese architecture, the physical survival of the edifice is not as important as the permanent embodiment of words as monument. Words are perpetuated through their connection to a particular person, place or event as enlivened by architecture. ... An individual's life span may be fleeting but writings survive to express the virtuous and meritorious qualities of their author.²⁵⁶

Concern with the propagation and perpetuation of his virtue and merit has been widely recognized as a defining characteristic of the Qianlong emperor, whose calligraphic legacy, noted previously, ranges from huge characters inscribed on mountainsides, to inscriptions on the most renowned works of painting and calligraphy in Chinese history, to inscribed panels found at sites throughout the former Qing Empire. Apart from the specific subject and context of the

²⁵⁴ Such gateways are also referred to as *baofang* 寶坊 or *paifang* 牌坊. *Pailou* are placed at entrances of important sites or areas and a standard part of the visual vocabulary of Chinese architecture. *Pailou* are often described as ‘ceremonial archways’ due to similarities with triumphal arches in European architecture, but since *pailou* are strictly trabeate in structure, I prefer ‘ceremonial gateway’ as a more accurate description than archway. Because they are a unique type of Chinese architectural structure, I will use the term *pailou* throughout. Such *pailou* were ubiquitous in Chinese cities before the reconstructions of the recent decades. Examples of *pailou* not only survive physically at historic sites such as the Yonghegong, but also in memory through street names and place names. In Beijing the “East Four” (Dongsi 東四) and “West Four” (Xisi 西四) are intersections that once had four large *pailou*, and “East Single” (Dongdan 東單) and “West Single” (Xidan 西單) are former locations of large single *pailou*. Naquin, *Peking*, 271. Dongsi and Dongdan (“East Four” and “East Single”) are, like Yonghegong, also the names of modern subway stops.

²⁵⁵ Liu, “Wen-Yüan-Ko,” 2.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

imperial inscription, the act of inscribing itself can be understood as mutually glorifying the emperor and glorifying the site with imperial association. However, in the case of the Manchu Qing emperors it had the further significance of asserting their legitimacy as the inheritors and protectors of Chinese elite literary culture, a legitimacy underscored by the emperor's esteemed calligraphic skill.²⁵⁷

The pailou and their inscriptions mark the formal entrance to the site, but they are also gateways marking the beginning of a gradual transition for the visitor from the familiar visual vocabulary of Chinese architecture, inscriptions and imperial symbolism to the less familiar visual vocabulary of Tibetan Buddhism. In the manner of other Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the capital that Naquin notes "...did not advertise their foreignness,"²⁵⁸ the pailou at Yonghegong give no hint of the Tibetan character of the site. Their decorations are strictly imperial in their symbolism. The Chinese-style roofs of the pailou use imperial yellow tiles and support the apotropaic *wenshou* 吻獸 sculptures that also help to indicate the rank of the structure in the hierarchy of Qing imperial buildings. The North Pailou (Fig. 11), on the axis of the site, is wider and grander than the others, and has two additional subsidiary roofs that bring the number of individual roof sections to nine, a number with important imperial associations. In traditional yin-yang numerology, odd numbers are considered yang and even numbers yin. Nine, as the highest odd single digit, is therefore the most powerful yang number, and its use in an imperial context associates the emperor with the active and expansive powers of yang.

²⁵⁷ Examples of the emperor's calligraphy are presented and critiqued as works of art in Evelyn Sakakida Rawski and Jessica Rawson, *China: The Three Emperors, 1662-1795* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 435-36; his calligraphy is discussed in relation to legitimation in Mark C. Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009) 110.

²⁵⁸ Naquin, *Peking*, 590.

Under the roofs on the side bays are large, openwork panels carved with complex dragon/phoenix designs called “The Dragon and Phoenix Harbinger Prosperity” (*longfeng chengxiang* 龍鳳呈祥) (Fig. 75). As symbols of the imperial couple, images of dragons and phoenixes are prevalent at imperial sites. They are the most prominent motifs on the pailou and also appear individually in other of its smaller panels. A similar repeated motif called “Two Dragons Sporting with a Pearl” (*erlong xizhu* 二龍戲珠) (Fig. 76) is found at the center of one of the two main beams in each bay, both painted in gold and carved in openwork sections. Other painted designs follow the canon of Qing architectural decoration, with complex, symmetrical and geometric forms such as the ‘whirling flower color pattern’ (*xuanzi caihua* 旋子彩畫), alternating with painted or openwork dragon and phoenix motifs. Unlike the decorative painting on the buildings further inside, these structures include no Tibetan *dharani* or mantra or even images of the Buddhist “Triple Gem.” One motif can be loosely identified as a Tibetan crossed vajra (S. *viśvavajra*), but it is so stylized as to be almost unrecognizable as such. (Fig. 75) The lack of overt Tibetan Buddhist symbolism extends to the pailou inscriptions that were carefully composed to resonate with both Buddhist and Confucian meanings simultaneously.

Pailou Inscriptions

An inscription panel appears on the central bay on each side of each pailou just beneath the roof section. The inscriptions are intaglio-carved characters painted in with gold, and carved imperial seals identify the calligraphy (and by implication the composition) as “by the imperial brush. In the eyes of the Chinese-literate elite these inscriptions were the key to the significance of the pailou, and in many cases to the significance of the site itself. Each inscription has a

complex, multilayered meaning, and the multivalent character of the inscriptions accords with that of Yonghegong as a whole. As Lessing noted,

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that such inscriptions are more often than not composed to surprise or even puzzle the Chinese literatus by the varieties of associations they evoke and the interpretations of which they seem capable.²⁵⁹

Although varied interpretations are possible, I will concentrate on the meanings that relate to the intersecting functions of the site as an imperial ancestral temple and Buddhist monastery, meanings that, due to the flexibility of literary Chinese, can have both Confucian and Buddhist significance. The wealth of site-specific associations and levels of interpretation engendered in these meaning-laden characters is truly impressive, whether they were composed by the thirty-three year old Qianlong emperor in 1744, as I will assume here, or at some later time.

The following inscriptions are found on the pailou in Courtyard I. ‘Outer’ refers to those facing away from the Pailou Courtyard, and ‘inner’ refers to those facing in.²⁶⁰

1. West Pailou, outer: “The Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva Perfectly Realized” and “The Ten Directions in Complete Cooperation” (*Shi Di Yuan Tong* 十地圓通)
2. West Pailou, inner: “Blessings Overflow [as Numerous as] the Golden Sands” (*Fu Yan Jin Sha* 福衍金沙)
3. East Pailou, inner: “Loving-kindness Abounds in the Precious Leaves” (*Ci Long Bao Ye* 慈隆寶葉)
4. East Pailou, outer: “In the Four Directions a Pure Land Opens” (*Si Qu Jing Pi* 四衢淨闢)
5. North Pailou, inner: “Throughout the Land Respect for One’s Parents” (*Huan Hai Zun Qin* 寰海尊親)

²⁵⁹ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 162, note 1a.

²⁶⁰ My translations are indebted to Lessing, and the Chinese glosses provided in Niu, *Yonghegong*.

6. North Pailou, outer: “Among All Sentient Beings Benevolence and Longevity” (*Qun Sheng Ren Shou* 群生仁壽)

A Chinese-literate visitor from the eighteenth century to the present who entered this courtyard could read these inscriptions as being of a general and auspicious nature, with Confucian and Buddhist interpretations available. They could be read as both descriptions of ideal states, as I have translated them, but also injunctions to each reader to bring such states about. They also may act as performative speech, creating a kind of eternal prayer akin to the prayers conveyed by Tibetan prayer flags or rotating prayer wheels.²⁶¹ In the eighteenth century these inscriptions may have also asserted that such ideal states actually existed throughout the Qing Empire under the enlightened rule of the Qianlong emperor as *Ākavartin*.

The inscriptions also include more subtle religious and political themes that were directed at a more specialized audience, one that included their author, the Qianlong emperor himself, the Qing emperors who succeeded him, and those in the imperial circle who appreciated the multivalent symbolic language utilized by the court. One theme is suggested by the inscriptions on the West Pailou that may be understood to associate the Yongzheng emperor with *Śākyamuni*. A second theme is implied by the inscriptions on the East Pailou referring to the creation of a Pure Land on earth by the *ākavartin* emperor and the coming of Maitreya. A third theme, suggested by the inscriptions on the North Pailou, may also be seen as a description of a Pure Land, but has a more overtly Confucian flavor. It seems to emphasize the extension of imperial authority to all peoples and parts of the empire, a clear nod to the existence of the Mongols and Tibetans who staffed Yonghegong (whether they could read the inscriptions or not). Detailed interpretations of each inscription follow.

²⁶¹ I thank Amy McNair for the idea of performative speech in relation to these inscriptions. Amy McNair, personal communication, 2013.

My interpretation of the inscriptions begins with the first inscription a visitor or even passer-by might see: the outer inscription on the West Pailou. Because Yonghegong was originally a residence located on a main road in a crowded residential district, the site is not entered from the south, as many imperial sites and Buddhist monasteries are, but from the west, through the gate that opens in from the main street.

1. West Pailou, outer: “Perfect Realization of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva” and “The Ten Directions in Complete Cooperation.” (*Shi Di Yuan Tong* 十地圓通)

Lessing translates the first inscription on the West Pailou, *Shi Di Yuan Tong* 十地圓通 as “Perfect Realization of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva,” and suggests that “(t)his may imply that the temple contains gods and saints belonging to all the ten stages leading to perfect enlightenment and that its inmates as well as its visitors shall become participant in it.”²⁶² Bodhisattvas of the tenth stage are so-called transcendent bodhisattvas, such as Maitreya and Mañjuśrī.

Lessing and Niu note the possible dual Buddhist and Confucian interpretations of many inscriptions at the site, including this one. However, in some cases the interpretations in Niu foreground the Confucian, finding references in non-Buddhist Chinese literature for even such standard Buddhist terminology as ‘all sentient beings’ (*qunsheng* 群生).²⁶³ Niu also associates *shidi* 十地 with the ten stages of the bodhisattva, but further notes the common understanding of *shidi* as referring to the ten directions.²⁶⁴ For *yuantong* 圓通, the authors interpret *yuan* to mean

²⁶² Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 3.

²⁶³ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 452-53.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 449.

complete and *tong* to mean full cooperation together.²⁶⁵ This suggests a purely political interpretation of the inscription: “the ten directions in complete cooperation.” This is certainly a goal of any empire, past or present, and was certainly relevant in a site devoted to maintaining harmony between the court and the Qing Mongols.

Niu notes the usage of the term in the writings of the Tang Confucian scholar Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648) and in the “Biography of Tao Hongjing” section of the *Liangshu* (635), but also in the Buddhist *Lengyanjing* 楞嚴經.²⁶⁶ However, in Chinese literature more broadly the Buddhist usage of the term *yuantong* is far more common. A scan and comparison of the frequency of the term *yuantong* in Confucian and Buddhist texts reveals a far greater occurrence of the term in the online *Taishō* Tripitaka (1,405) with no examples in the Confucian sources in the online Chinese Text Project.²⁶⁷

Another Buddhist interpretation hinges on the multiple functions of the site. A fundamental aspect of the function of Yonghegong derives from the site’s role as a former residence and later ancestral shrine of the Yongzheng emperor. To the Qianlong emperor this role may have been at least equal to the status of the site as a Tibetan Buddhist monastic college for Qing Mongols. In his 1744 inscription found on the stelae in Courtyard III, the emperor equates his father with Śākyamuni Buddha, and asserts that his father had achieved the ten stages of Bodhisattva development as well as the highest level of enlightenment in the Mahayana tradition (*zhengdeng zhengjue* 正等正覺, *S. annuttara-samyak sambodhi*), making “Perfect Realization of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva” not only a reference to Maitreya or other

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 451.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 454.

²⁶⁷ SAT Daizōkyō Text Database (http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index_en.html, accessed 2/10/2011) and the Chinese Text Project (<http://ctext.org/>, accessed 2/10/2011). Certainly the online availability of these resources makes such a search easier today than it was for the authors of *Yonghegong*. Admittedly, this is a somewhat cursory search method, but the vast difference in numbers I believe is telling.

deities but also a veiled reference to the Yongzheng emperor.²⁶⁸ As a respectful reference to his father's spiritual accomplishment, this association can also be seen as Confucian filial devotion.

Although we might suspect that the Qianlong emperor's usual lack of restraint in self-glorification would lead to an interpretation that expanded the reference to himself, his own formal Buddhist practice did not begin until 1745-46 (Qianlong 10), a year or so after the pailou were constructed, and his practice intensified in the 1750s. Therefore, that level of interpretation was probably not part of the original intention of the inscription. However, this interpretation may well have accrued to the inscription later, as the emperor became more comfortable with his role as a manifestation of Mañjuśrī, the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* emperor.

I suggest that a further layer of interpretation hinges, paradoxically, on the very ambiguity of the inscription. This particular pailou inscription is the most public of all at the site because it faces the street and can easily be seen from the outside by the public, and “the public that mattered,” in Naquin's terms, were the Chinese literati.²⁶⁹ Because the key sites of literati geography in Beijing, the Imperial College and Temple of Confucius, were located directly across the street from the Yonghegong entrance, many of the passers-by would have been members of that class. Historically, Confucian scholars were suspicious of the potential influence on Chinese emperors of alternative (at worst ‘heterodox’) modes of thought found in Buddhism or Daoism. It was perhaps out of deference to Confucian sensibilities that Yonghegong and other Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in the capital maintained a generally low profile. The classical, Confucian overtones of the words “*yuan tong*” in the pailou inscription might have assuaged the concerns of passing Confucian scholars.

²⁶⁸ The 1744 stele inscription, and the 1792 “On Lamas” inscription are provided in Zhang Yuxin 張羽新, *Qing zhengfu yu lamajiao* 清政府與喇嘛教 (“The Qing Government and Lamaism”) (Xuchang, Henan: Xizang renming chubanshe, 1988) 336-338 (1744); 339-343 (“On Lamas”). The English translation provided here follows Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 9-12 (1744) and 58-61 (“On Lamas”).

²⁶⁹ Naquin, *Peking*, 357.

That the pailou inscription can have Confucian as well as more specifically Buddhist meanings would also have allowed it to float between the two, demonstrating the “multicultural fluency” of the court that Berger pointed to.²⁷⁰ I find it telling that the most public of the three pailou at the formal entrance to the site is so rich in associations and possible interpretations, representative of the ‘self-fashioning’ of the Qing court as a multicultural entity, and reflecting the Qianlong emperor’s predilection for symbols with multiple layers of meaning. Again, such messages (and policies) were not *either* political or religious, Confucian or Buddhist, but both simultaneously.

2. West inner: “Blessings Overflow [as Numerous as] the Golden Sands” (*Fu Yan Jin Sha* 福衍金沙)

Lessing reads *yan* 衍 as *xian* 銜 (“cherish, harbour”), taking *fu yan* as ‘merits contained within.’²⁷¹ He associates *jin sha* 金沙 with the Gold-sand River (S. *Hiranyavati*) near the site of Śākyamuni’s death and mentioned in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Niepan Jing* 涅槃經), and translates the reference according to the Buddhist trope ‘as numerous as the sands in the Ganges:’ “The merits contained (in this sacred place are [as] numerous as the sands in the) Gold-sand (River).” He further interprets both inscriptions on the West Pailou as prayers: “May I attain Perfect Realization of the Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva” and “May I attain merits as numerous as the sands in the Gold-sand River.”²⁷² Niu, reading the character as *yan* 衍 (“spread out”), glosses the inscription as “A life of happiness and satisfaction extending as long as the Golden-

²⁷⁰ Niu, Yonghegong, 452. Berger, *Empire*, 5.

²⁷¹ Due to a few examples of what may be misreadings of inscriptions by Lessing, I suspect that he was hampered by the generally dilapidated state of the site and probably the inscription panels in the early twentieth century that may have made reading the elevated panels a challenge.

²⁷² Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 3.

sand River,” pointing to a tributary of the Yangzi named Golden-sand River, but seemingly missing the Buddhist association of the name.

My translation incorporates Lessing’s link with the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* and connects that with the function of the site as an ancestral temple. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* is considered the final sermon of Śākyamuni Buddha before his physical death. The Qianlong emperor makes direct associations between his departed father and Śākyamuni in the 1744 stele, the same year the pailou inscriptions were probably composed, and it was an association likely fresh in his mind at the time. Therefore the blessings from the Buddha’s *Mahāparinirvāṇa* were linked with the blessings bestowed on an empire and a dutiful son by the recently departed Yongzheng emperor. The Qianlong emperor and his descendents would be reminded of this ancestral benevolence every time they exited the site and looked up at this inscription on the inner side of the West Pailou, moments after passing under the inscription on the outer side of the North Pailou, “Among All Sentient Beings Benevolence and Longevity.” These final inscriptions, the ‘last words’ of the symbolic program of the Yonghegong, were perhaps designed as a wish for longevity to the emperor and his descendents and to re-inspire them to spread these blessings to the world outside.

3. East inner: “Loving-kindness Abounds in the Precious Leaves” (*Ci Long Bao Ye* 慈隆寶葉)

Lessing briefly glosses this inscription as “(His) love (*maitrī*) abounds (in the) precious leaves” or “The sacred scriptures abound in evidence of his love.”²⁷³ Lessing associates the ‘precious leaves’ with the Buddhist scriptures, traditionally written on palmyra, or *pattra* leaves, which were transliterated as *beiduoye* 貝多葉, and Lessing points out the poetic substitution of

²⁷³ Ibid., 162, n. 1b. He uses the character *niu* 犏 for *bei*, perhaps a misprint.

bao 寶 (precious, treasure) for *bei* 貝 (precious). He further notes that love, S. *maitrī* (“loving-kindness”), may refer to Maitreya, his unstated connection being that the root of the name Maitreya is *maitrī*, the defining characteristic of this deity.²⁷⁴ Berger develops the connection with Maitreya more fully, noting the central importance of Maitreya at the site as a whole, and connecting the precious leaves with the tantras given by Maitreya to Asaṅga in India.²⁷⁵

Although more often understood in Buddhist terms, Niu further notes that *ci* 慈 “compassion, mercy” is the root of parents’ love, which, although not stated directly, again suggests a Confucian connotation.²⁷⁶ To all of this I would add that precious leaves may also evoke the paradisiacal gardens of Maitreya’s Tuṣita heaven. I am assuming that the inscriptions date to the 1744 reconstruction of Yonghegong, predating the 1750 addition of the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* and its pavilion. The inscriptions certainly could have been updated at a later date in the Qianlong period. Even so, Maitreya could still be considered a presence in the 1744 Yonghegong, most plausibly by implication in the emperor’s status as *śakravartin*.

4. East outer: “In the Four Directions a Pure Land Opens” (*Si Qu Jing Pi* 四衢淨闢)

Lessing associates this inscription with a quotation from Shen Yue 沈約 (441-513) in the *Peiwenyunfu* 佩文韻府 dictionary, which he translates: “The path of the four roads (*siqu* 四衢) is difficult to open and the door of entering the right path or *samādhi* is like (or still) closed.”²⁷⁷ He therefore translates the inscription as “The four roads (i.e. all the roads of salvation) lay open before our eyes.” He further suggests that this may have been intended for the monks of the nearby Cypress Grove Monastery, toward which the pailou faces, as a nod to

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 4.

²⁷⁵ Berger, *Empire*, 117-18.

²⁷⁶ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 455.

²⁷⁷ 四衢道難闢入正扉猶掩. Ibid., 4.

Buddhist unity.²⁷⁸ Niu translates the inscription as “When respect for the Buddhadharma [Dharma] (extends) to the four directions, evil is abolished and an immaculate world is constructed.”²⁷⁹

My translation, “In the Four Directions a Pure Land Opens,” favors the Niu interpretation, but makes a more explicit reference to the tradition of emperor as *śakravartin*. As well as being a symbol of the Dharma, round, unbroken and requiring constant effort to keep it turning, the Dharma Wheel (S. *dharmaśakra*) is a symbol of the four directions and the tool that allows the *śakravartin* unobstructed movement on the roads in those four directions. Furthermore, the reign of the *śakravartin* creates a Pure Land on earth, and ushers in the coming of Maitreya. Given the centrality of *śakravartin*-Maitreya symbolism at Yonghegong, I suggest that this interpretation should be considered the primary meaning.

5. North inner: “Throughout the Land Respect for One’s Parents” (*Huan Hai Zun Qin* 寰海尊親), and north outer: “Among All Sentient Beings Benevolence and Longevity” (*Qun Sheng Ren Shou* 群生仁壽)

The North Pailou marks the formal entry into the north-south central axis of the site and is larger and grander than the other two pailou, with nine roof sections and large flanking stone lions that assert its imperial significance. Furthermore, although its inscriptions express the most general auspicious concepts among the three pailou, in expressing them ‘throughout the land’ and ‘among all sentient beings’ in overtly Confucian language, they are also the most manifestly imperial in the Chinese mode.

Lessing reads the two inscriptions as a connected thought: *Huan Hai Zun Qin*²⁸⁰ “(If the people within) the (four) seas respect (their) parents,” *Qun Sheng Ren Shou* “(Then) all beings

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ 乃尊佛法四通八達，屏除邪惡，創立無垢染的清淨世界。Niu, *Yonghegong*, 455.

(will be possessed of) humaneness and longevity.” He takes *zunqin* as a phrase meaning ‘to respect ones parents.’ Niu interprets the two with more parallelism, keeping the individual meanings of the last two characters in each: *zun qin* as ‘respect’ and ‘trust’ or ‘intimacy,’ and, like Lessing, *ren shou* as ‘benevolence (humaneness)’ and ‘longevity.’²⁸¹ Both Lessing and Niu emphasize the Confucian character of each inscription, with Niu providing numerous references in Confucian literature, but both also hasten to point out Buddhist interpretations. Lessing, based on his translation of *zunqin* as “respect (their) parents,” explains how the Buddhist notion of filiality derives from the fact that all beings have at some point in time been ones mother or father.²⁸² Niu simply equates benevolence (*ren*) towards all beings (*qunsheng*) with Buddhist compassion (*dacibei* 大慈悲).²⁸³ I agree with the primarily Confucian orientation of the two inscriptions, but hasten to add that the term *qunsheng*, like *yuantong*, is used far more frequently in Buddhist texts than in Confucian, with 3032 usages of the term in the SAT Daizōkyō Text Database and nineteen in Confucian texts in the Chinese Text Project.²⁸⁴

A Confucian emphasis in the main pailou inscription can be understood in relation to a number of messages that the emperor and the Qing court wished to convey at Yonghegong. The first is the emperor’s filial devotion to his father, a relationship at the heart of Confucian political thought. By demonstrating his filiality at Yonghegong, the Qianlong emperor performed a number of significant acts simultaneously. He legitimized his reign in the Chinese cultural sphere, reconciling the sometimes conflicting concepts of ‘rule by virtue’ and ‘rule by heredity.’ Furthermore, since filial piety is the basis of a harmonious society in the Confucian tradition, “throughout the land” and “among all sentient beings” broadens the injunction beyond the

²⁸⁰ Lessing reverses *huanhai* 寰海 as *haihuan* 海寰 in characters and transliteration. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 5.

²⁸¹ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 453.

²⁸² Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 5.

²⁸³ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 453.

²⁸⁴ SAT Daizōkyō Text Database (accessed 2/9/2011); Chinese Text Project (accessed 2/9/2011).

relationship of the Qianlong emperor to his father, and extends it to the subjects from distant parts of the empire, and specifically to those who staffed Yonghegong, the Qing Mongols.

Part of the Qing discourse on loyalty communicated to the Mongols who became Qing subjects was rooted in the basic relationship of father to son. As Christopher Atwood explains:

The Qing made use of at least one language of loyalty that proved equally at home in the “land of fish and rice” along the Yangzi and in the rolling steppes of Khalkha Mongolia. Among Chinese, Manchus, and Mongols, they claimed and succeeded in getting their subjects to agree, at least verbally, that their power and authority was analogous to, yet even higher than, the power and authority of parents over children...²⁸⁵

This is not to suggest that the all of the Mongol monks and other Mongol visitors who passed beneath the North Pailou could necessarily read the Chinese calligraphic inscription of the emperor, but it matched the atmosphere laden with the responsibilities and rewards of filial piety that permeated Yonghegong. Because the main temple for Mongols in the capital was also the Qianlong emperor’s shrine for his father, the Mongol residents could view the emperor’s regular visits to pay his filial respects, and even more importantly they were given the great honor and responsibility of protecting the site and venerating the Yongzheng emperor with daily prayers. This must have encouraged thoughts of a filial nature that the Qing emperors might hope to channel into loyalty to the empire.

The pailou inscriptions collectively present a complex array of Confucian and Buddhist concepts, ideals and injunctions that provide a thematic introduction to the multivalent messages of Yonghegong. Although the pailou remain, the significance of some layers of these messages has been generally forgotten. However, recent scholarship (noted in Chapters Two and Three) has begun to recover some of the lost meanings in the interplay of art, politics and religion that the emperor’s calligraphic inscriptions and their spectacular architectural frames assert.

²⁸⁵ Christopher P. Atwood, “Worshipping Grace: The Language of Loyalty in Qing Mongolia,” *Late Imperial China*, 21.2 (December, 2000) 129.

Pailou Courtyard Structures No Longer Extant

Although the pailou of the Pailou Courtyard survive from the Qing period, two other interesting structures were once found in the courtyard but are no longer in existence. They are the Great Stage Tower, which existed during the Qianlong period but was removed at some point before the early twentieth century, and the Soul-summoning Pavilion, which was added as a memorial for Japanese troops killed during the Boxer Uprising in 1900 and dismantled in the 1950s.

The Great Stage Tower (*Daxilou* 大戲樓)

Theatrical performances sponsored as an offering to the gods or ancestors are part of a long tradition at Chinese temples, and were common sights in the eighteenth century.²⁸⁶ Although temporary stages were typical, larger temples and shrines had permanent structures dedicated to such performances. The Great Stage Tower at Yonghegong was probably one of these, related to Yonghegong's role as an ancestral temple for the spirit of the Yongzheng emperor. The tower was the southernmost structure of the site, located where the south wall of the courtyard is today. The building is clearly indicated in the 1750 map, and probably survived into the nineteenth century.²⁸⁷ (Fig. 77) This was the most typical location for such a structure, with the stage facing north ostensibly for the enjoyment of the gods or spirits of the departed.²⁸⁸

The term tower (*lou* 樓) indicates a multi-storied building, and on the 1750 map, the building is portrayed as a seven-bay wide structure with a two-story tower making up the three

²⁸⁶ For a discussion of theater and ritual in China, see Barbara E. Ward, "Not Merely Players: Drama, Art and Ritual in Traditional China," *Man* 14, no. 1 (Mar., 1979): 18-39. See also Anning Jing, *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual and Theater* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

²⁸⁷ The alley outside the Southern Yingbi (spirit screen) and south wall is still called "Stage Tower Hutong" (*Xilou hutong* 戲樓胡同), a reminder of a lost structure like so many street names and subway stops in the capital. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 226.

²⁸⁸ Ward, "Not Merely," 25.

central bays. The multiple stories of the stage were constructed in part for complex staging but also to accommodate the special mechanical effects of the theatrical productions. Various supernatural characters could appear from trap doors in the ceilings or floors.²⁸⁹ Although common enough in Chinese temples, such a stage tower is to my knowledge unknown in Tibetan Buddhist temples, where ritual dances are performed in open courtyards, and its presence at Yonghegong is another example of the complex, multidimensional role that the site performed in the Qing period.

The Spirit-summoning Pavilion (*Zhaohunting* 招魂亭)

The small shrine known as the Spirit-summoning Pavilion (*Zhaohunting* 招魂亭) stood in the southeast corner of the courtyard from when it was built ca. 1900 until the structure was dismantled in the 1950s. (Fig. 78) The making of the structure, the differing framings of its history, and its dismantling are all related to its function as a monument for Japanese soldiers killed during the Boxer Uprising, and the legacy of the age of Japanese imperialism in the tumultuous events of the mid-twentieth century in China.

The Spirit-summoning Pavilion was a blocky, geometric form consisting of a tall, stone platform upon which a Japanese-style *gorintō* 五輪塔 funerary monument was placed. Behind the monument was a taller, stepped tower with an upper level that enclosed a seated Buddhist statue. This upper level was open on four sides, but was enclosed by a metal screen to protect the sculpture within. The rough, unadorned style of the monument was not very much in

²⁸⁹ Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of the History of Natural Sciences, *History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture* (Beijing: Science Press, 1986) 149-50. Henceforth, *History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture*. Although not directly connected with an ancestral temple, other extant Qing-era imperial stage structures can be seen in the Forbidden City, such as the three-storied Great Stage Tower of the Pavilion of Flowing Music (*Changyinge* 暢音閣), and the Great Stage Tower in the *Yiheyuan* 頤和園 in northwest Beijing.

keeping with the elaborate, decorative pailou with which it shared the courtyard, but the removal of the Spirit-summoning Pavilion had little to do with aesthetics.

Bouillard, writing in 1931, shows the location of the Spirit Summoning Pavilion on his map of the site, and very briefly describes it, noting the seated, meditating Buddha and what can be identified as a *gorintō* in front of the rockery. Curiously, he does not identify it as Japanese, but does discuss the Buddhist Five Elements symbolism of the *gorintō*.²⁹⁰ He also provides a sketch of the structure. Lessing, writing a decade later in 1942, does not include the structure on his map, and merely notes it in his description of Courtyard I. “In passing we may notice a curious stupa (pagoda) with a gilt image of Buddha *Amitābha*. It was erected in memory of the Japanese soldiers killed during the Boxer rebellion in 1900.”²⁹¹

However, *Yonghegong zhilue*, edited by Jin Liang and originally published in 1953 after the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War, presents a more complicated discussion of the structure, probably still in situ when the book was published.²⁹² The section begins by noting its location and size: a small ‘artificial mountain’ inside the south side of the East Pailou, about four meters in height, with a small pavilion on top. Inside the pavilion, facing east, is a life-sized, gilt bronze seated statue of Dizangwang 地藏王 (S. *Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva*). Then, the text recounts:

After the Marco Polo Bridge Incident [1937], when the Japanese imperialists were in the process of going on a rampage in collusion with the Beijing warlord government, they said that this pavilion, which they called the Spirit-summoning Pavilion, was erected as a memorial to the victory in 1900 of the Eight-Nation Alliance over the Chinese. The Buddha image was made in Kyoto, Japan, and was a Śākyamuni Buddha, transported to Beijing, and used to expiate the sins of the Japanese officers and soldiers killed in action.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Bouillard, *Le Temple*, 49.

²⁹¹ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 5.

²⁹² Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 155-57.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 155-56.

He quotes a Japanese author, Nakano Kōkan 中野江漢, whose “Sketches of Peking Life” (*Pekin hanjōki* 北京繁昌記) recounts the construction of the monument by the Japanese Military Police *yamen* as a memorial for Japanese soldiers killed during the Boxer Uprising. Nakano notes the provenance of the Śākyamuni Buddha as Kyoto, and that it is the only Japanese Buddha image sent to China.²⁹⁴

Jin rejects this assertion. He first quotes *Yonghegong daoguansuo kanwu*, v. 3 雍和宮導觀所刊物, a Republican-era journal published from 1934-37, which gives a different source for the statue:

Legend has it that in Qing Guangxu 26 [1900-01], during the Boxer Rebellion, the commander of the Japanese troops removed this Buddha from within the Forbidden City, and it is surmised used a horse and cart to drag it eastward. Not quite reaching the Dongzhimen [the northeast city gate on the east city wall], they were unable to advance. They turned the cart and reaching Yonghegong, built the pavilion as a memorial...²⁹⁵

He goes on to present further details, based on oral tradition:

On the basis of what has been passed down by elders in Beijing, the Spirit-summoning Pavilion’s bronze Buddha is not from the Forbidden City, it was from Beihai Park. From among the ten thousand golden Buddha statues of Beihai Park’s Tower of Myriad Buddhas (*Wanfolou* 萬佛樓), and the large and small bronze Buddhas of the Monastery of Elucidation and Blessings (*Chanfusi* 闡福寺) and other places, all were completely looted in 1900 by French and Japanese imperialists from within the Beihai Park organization “United Headquarters” (*Lianhe siling bu* 聯合司令部). The Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva statue from the Spirit-summoning Pavilion inside the front gate of Yonghegong was in fact looted at that time, and because the carts were few but the Buddhas many, dropped “from the tiger’s mouth.”²⁹⁶

I have not been able to determine the specific date of the removal of the Spirit-summoning Pavilion, but suspect it must have been demolished for the October, 1952 renovation,

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 156. For Nakano, see Nakano Kōkan 中野江漢, *Pekin hanjōji* 北京繁昌記 (Peking: Shina fubutsu kenkyūkai, 1922-25). “Sketches of Peking Life” follows Naquin.

²⁹⁵ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 156.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 156-57.

probably too late for its removal to be noted by Jin.²⁹⁷ Although the date of its removal is not clear, the reasons for the removal are more transparent. Whatever the source of the statue, given the widespread chaos and looting during the Boxer Rebellion the account provided by Jin is certainly plausible and probably reflects general sentiments toward the stone pavilion during the 1950s. The presence of a Japanese-style monument to Japanese soldiers, a monument that was associated with both Japanese imperialism and the events of the Boxer Rebellion, was an unpleasant reminder of China's "century of humiliation," and its late addition to the site, relatively small size, and aesthetic and cultural incongruity encouraged its removal.

The Role of the Prefatory Courtyard

In comparison to the more architecturally and artistically rich courtyards addressed in the following chapters, the first courtyard seems to be much less important to the site as a whole, a status magnified today by its use primarily as a parking lot. An attentive visitor might note the magnificent pailou, their imperial decorative symbols, and the large stone lions flanking the entrance to the axis of the site. However, for the visitor familiar with the various themes common to eighteenth-century imperial discourse in China, the courtyard performs a vital role in shaping one's experience of Yonghegong, an experience carefully directed by the imperial inscriptions. These inscriptions can be seen as public statements of intent, albeit targeted to a limited, elite public. The messages of the Pailou Courtyard act as a meticulously composed overture, the imperial symbolism and complex wordplay in the inscriptions introducing variations on the theme of the universal emperor that will appear throughout the site.

²⁹⁷ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 275. Another possibility is its removal during the larger renovation in the late 1970s.

Chapter Five: The Outer Mandala, Part Two: The Garden Section and the Palace Section

Introduction

Having passed through the Imperial Periphery and the Prefatory Courtyard, in this chapter we enter the garden section and the palace section. Our movement through metaphorical time and space begins with a reference to the past, the garden-monasteries of ancient India at the time of Śākyamuni Buddha that were described in the sutras. Passing through the tree-lined courtyard and monastic residences of the garden section, we come to the gates, courtyards and works of Chinese imperial architecture that announce and define an area that is unmistakably palatial. The buildings that were the actual palaces of Prince Yong are now the palaces of buddhas, bodhisattvas and other deities, but in the outer mandala they can be seen to represent the world of the imperial present, the palaces of the Qing court. After describing the major parts of the garden and palace sections, I will conclude with an analysis and interpretation of both sections in relation to the three spheres.

The Garden Section

Courtyard II: Courtyard of the Imperial Carriage Way (Niandaoyuan 輦道院)

Passing through the North Pailou, the visitor enters the second courtyard, known as the Courtyard of the Imperial Carriage Way (Figs. 12-13). It is a narrow courtyard compared to the others at the site (38 m east-west by 152 m south-north) and includes a long, paved pathway that stretches north from the North Pailou to the Gate of Luminous Peace (*Zhaotaimen* 昭泰門).²⁹⁸ On either side of the central path are rows of tall ginkgo trees and low shrubs that create a serene

²⁹⁸ Measurements follow Niu, *Yonghegong*, 227.

contrast to the dramatic Prefatory Courtyard with its colorful, gilded pailou and calligraphic proclamations. The long walkway and the sylvan setting act as a contemplative, transitional space that prepares the visitor for the sacred world of the temple. Particularly in the summer, the courtyard is like a cool, shaded tunnel for the visitor walking the long pathway.

In the Qing period the imperial carriage way (*niandao* 輦道) was a road designated for the arrival of the emperor, the path over which his sedan chair was carried. During visits to Yonghegong, the emperor was carried through the Prefatory Courtyard and along the imperial carriage way by thirty-two uniformed officers.²⁹⁹ Once inside, he was greeted by rows upon rows of kneeling dignitaries: high-ranking Buddhist worthies such as *khutukhtu*, *tulku*, *kanbu*, as well as secular dignitaries such as princes, dukes, Mongol *jasak* and civil and military court officials.³⁰⁰

Today, visitors also pass under large, red banners strung across the path, banners of a type commonly used today for official proclamations or political phrases in public places in China. These banners emphasize the dangers of fire, a crucial concern at historic religious sites because burning incense is one of the major forms of worship at temples in China. At Yonghegong, devout visitors endeavor to offer incense at each major hall, and some offer to each of the hundreds of major deity sculptures at the site.³⁰¹ This presents a great challenge to caretakers in a site made up of historical, timber-frame buildings. Burning of incense therefore has been limited to large, standardized metal burners placed outside of the major halls. In

²⁹⁹ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 158.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Some visitors even offer incense and money to the imperial stele. The floors of the stele pavilions and stele bases are covered with coins, bills and incense. Staff I talked to laughingly dismiss this practice, but I am curious to see if it represents some lingering association between imperial and religious authority, or simply an uninformed desire to make comprehensive offerings.

offering to individual statues inside of the halls, believers are permitted to lay unlit sticks of incense in front of the images.

Furthermore, in an interesting synthesis of the practical (fire control) and the didactic, one of the banners (Fig. 13) also emphasizes that burning only three sticks of incense is an appropriate Buddhist offering (to the ‘Three Treasures’ of Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha), in contrast to the burning of whole packages or large bundles of incense sticks, as is more commonly practiced at Chinese religious sites. This banner is an excellent example of two roles that the Yonghegong administration has taken on: preservation of the site and a normative construction of Tibetan Buddhist practice.

Monastic Residences

The narrowness of the Courtyard of the Imperial Carriage Way allowed space outside the east and west walls of the courtyard that was used primarily for monastic residences of two kinds. The first type, known as a *focang* 佛倉, is a residential compound for high ranking Mongolian *khutukhtu*. The other much more numerous type of residential structure is the monastic dormitory (*lianfang* 連房). Both of these types of structures still exist at the site, although they are used for other purposes and not open to the public.

Khutukhtu Residences (Focang 佛倉)

Focang is a term for the residential compounds granted by the Qing court to Mongolian *khutukhtu*. The Chinese term *focang* is, I suspect, a transliteration of *p’otang*, from the formal Tibetan term for a reincarnate lama’s residence, *lama’i p’otang*, or “the palace of the teacher.”³⁰²

³⁰² Mills, *Identity*, 65. These estates are today referred to as *labrang*.

Jin presents an overview of the role of *focang* in the Qing period, their distribution among temples in Beijing and its environs, and the size of individual *focang* within the Yonghegong complex.³⁰³ The following is a paraphrase of this overview, with some additions for clarity.

Focang were traveling guesthouses (*xingguan* 行館) for reincarnate lamas of Mongolia and Tibet when they were stationed in Beijing. In the Qing period they were divided into three types. The first was termed “Main Temple *Focang* Within the City” (*Chengnei benmiao focang* 城內本廟佛倉). An example of this is the Songzhusi 嵩祝寺, just north of the Forbidden City, which was the main residence of Rolpay Dorje.³⁰⁴ The second type of *focang* was called “Main Temple *Focang* outside the City” (*Chengwai benmiao focang* 城外本廟佛倉). An example is the Heisi 黑寺, or Black Monastery, outside the city wall and near the northwest gate, which was the Chahan (*Chahan daerhan* 察漢達爾罕) *khutukhtu*’s residence, built originally in 1645. The third type was the “Bestowed Residence *Focang*” (*Ciju focang* 賜居佛倉). If a *khutukhtu* had no permanent residence in Beijing, but was stationed there for an extended period, they would be granted this type of *focang*.

At Yonghegong, the *focang* outside the walls of the Courtyard of the Imperial Carriage Way seem to have evolved from 1750 to the early twentieth century. The 1750 QLJCQT shows rows of identical *lianfang* dormitory structures on both the east and west sides of the courtyard, but in the plan from the 1930s, certain sections have clearly become more architecturally diverse. (Figs. 8 and 79). These are the *focang* in their more developed form, and the following is a brief description of them. On the west side of Courtyard II are three small courtyards, arranged north-

³⁰³ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 158-61. Another detailed study of the *focang* at Yonghegong is Chen Qingying, *Yonghegong focang de jianshuo* 雍和宮佛倉的簡說, 2005.

<http://www.tibetology.ac.cn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5341&Itemid=218> It details the specific roles and importance of the various *khutukhtu* mentioned in this chapter.

³⁰⁴ Although some structures remain, the site was turned over to industrial usage, and was in very poor condition when I visited in 2005.

south. The southernmost is the Dongkuoer 洞闊爾 *khutukhtu's focang*, according to Jin the largest of the three, and including a chapel (*fotang* 佛堂), sleeping chamber, parlor, kitchen, and other structures. Next is the Samusa 薩木薩 *khutukhtu's focang*, the smallest of the three. Further north is the third courtyard, the Nuomenhan 諾們罕 *khutukhtu's focang*. This *focang* had earlier been located in the Eastern Plank Gate (*Dongbanzimen* 東板子門) building, next to the Tibetan Sutra Department.³⁰⁵ Outside the east wall at the north end of the courtyard is the Ajia 阿嘉 *khutukhtu's focang*, the largest and most lavish of all of the *focang* at Yonghegong. It was built in the Daoguang period (1821-51), and replaced a section of the monastic dormitories, discussed below.³⁰⁶ It is still in existence at the site under that name.

There were a number of other *focang* at the site. The first, the Tuguan 土觀 *khutukhtu's focang* was in the Eastern Academy, and was previously the largest at Yonghegong. To the east of it was the Tibetan Jilong 濟隆 *khutukhtu's focang*. In 1929 this *focang* was rebuilt as the Tibet Beiping Post for Administrative Affairs (*Xizang zhuping banshichu* 西藏駐平辦事處). Another *focang* was behind the Tuguan *focang*, and called the Guomang 果蟒 *khutukhtu focang*. In this area was also the Namuke 那木喀 *khutukhtu's focang* until 1900, when the Tibetan Sutra Department (*Zangjingguan* 藏經館) for printing Buddhist texts was established in the former North Great Gate (*Beidamen* 北大門).³⁰⁷

³⁰⁵ Chen, *Yonghegong focang*, n.p.

³⁰⁶ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 161.

³⁰⁷ Wei, *Yonghegong manlu*, 29. Wei's summary of Jin adds the 1900 date.

Monastic Dormitories (*Lianfang* 連房)³⁰⁸

The term *lianfang* is descriptive: *lian* 連 means ‘in succession’ or ‘connected’ and *fang* 房 means ‘house’ or ‘building,’ terms which clearly describe the rows of connected dormitory structures that once filled a large section of Yonghegong. (Fig. 8) Monastic dormitories are a typical feature of Buddhist monasteries, playing a crucial role in the daily lives of monks and their education, and often, like at Yonghegong in the past, making up a large part of the total area of the monastery. In the 1930s, the dormitories were arranged in three north-south rows of ten dormitory units each, divided by two north-south roads and one east-west road at the center. This created six blocks of five dormitory units each. The specific makeup of each unit varied, some with fewer structures some with more. The basic structure was a *wafang* 瓦房, a single-story, tiled roof building with a gabled roof. As noted above, the northwest block was replaced by the *Ajia khutukhtu*’s *focang*, leaving 25 dormitory units.

Stretching across the northernmost end of the dormitory area was a long line of linked *wafang* called the North Guard Building (*Beiweifang* 北卫房), 37 bays total, and at the southernmost end of the area was a similar but shorter structure called the South Guard Building (*Nanweifang* 南卫房), 20 bays total. These were originally guardhouses for the officials and soldiers who watched over the monks in the Qing period, but in the Republican period they were all refurbished as dormitories. The structures themselves still appear to be intact at the site based on satellite photos, but I have not been able to determine how they are currently being used.

³⁰⁸ Specifics of the dormitories paraphrase Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 161-64.

The Palace Section

Introduction and Overview

The palace section begins at the north end of the long, tree-lined path of Courtyard II with the Gate of Luminous Peace, the formal entrance hall to the palace section, and includes a series of buildings that encompass Courtyards III through V. Beyond the Gate of Luminous Peace is the large, open space of Courtyard III, the Courtyard of the Gate of Harmony and Peace. This courtyard include a number of important buildings: the eponymous gate itself, the Bell and Drum Towers, the Octagonal Stele Pavilions that house the two stone stele with the inaugural Yonghegong Stele Inscription in the four languages of the empire, as well as the *chaofang* and gates that make up the east and west walls.

Passing through the Gate of Harmony and Peace into the next courtyard, Courtyard IV, the visitor emerges on a raised stone and brick *danchi* platform, roughly sixteen meters wide and one meter high, known as the “imperial way” (*yudao* 御道), extending along the imperial axis of travel first indicated by the imperial carriage way in Courtyard II.³⁰⁹ The platform stretches north across Courtyard IV towards the next major hall, the Palace of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghegong* 雍和宮) that gives its name to the site as a whole. However, direct progress along the axis is interrupted by a large, square pavilion that fills much of the central space on the platform. This pavilion houses a massive, four-sided stone stele inscribed with the Qianlong emperor’s 1792 essay titled *Lamashuo* 喇嘛說 (“On Lamas”) discussed in Chapter Three. Passing by the pavilion, the visitor ascends three steps onto a twenty-seven meter wide paved stone platform in front of the Palace of Harmony and Peace, a grand, single-storied palatial

³⁰⁹ Measurements of buildings throughout, unless otherwise noted, are based on the Melchers plan.

structure and a formal hall akin to the Hall of Supreme Harmony (*Taihedian* 太和殿) in the Forbidden City.

From the Palace of Harmony and Peace, the visitor enters Courtyard V on another raised platform extending only about thirteen meters and ending with a flight of steps up to the final major building of the palace section, the Hall of Eternal Protection (*Yongyoudian* 永佑殿). This hall and its flanking gate structures are raised approximately two meters above ground level. The Hall of Eternal Protection is much smaller than the Palace of Harmony and Peace, and even slightly smaller than the Gate of Harmony and Peace. With its side gates it acts as both the final hall of the palace section and a passageway to the next physical and symbolic level of the site, the plateau section.

The other buildings in the palace section face east and west and flank the axial buildings. Whereas the main halls on the central axis were primarily for ritual use, these halls were used as classrooms for the monks, and are therefore referred to as the Four Study Halls (*Sixuedian* 四學殿).³¹⁰ My interpretation of the outer mandala focuses on the symbolic role of the axial halls, and I will only note the flanking halls here as part of the “courtyard house” plan of the palace section. With this general plan in mind let us examine the important components in more detail, concluding with my argument for an interpretation of it as the palace section of the outer mandala.

Courtyard III: Courtyard of the Gate of Harmony and Peace (Yonghemenyuan 雍和門院)

The entrance to the palace section is marked by the colorful, glazed-tile encrusted Gate of Luminous Peace, flanked by high, red walls extending to the edges of Courtyard II. Passing

³¹⁰ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 220.

through this gate, we enter the Courtyard of the Gate of Harmony and Peace, a large space roughly 80 meters wide and 48 meters deep.³¹¹ The northern end of the courtyard is taken up by a large, timber-frame building called the Gate of Harmony and Peace flanked by two small side gates. The east and west sides of the courtyard are made up by the East Asi Gate (*Dongasimen* 東阿斯門) and the West Asi Gate (*Xiasimen* 西阿斯門). In contrast to the ceremonial entrance to Yonghegong (through Courtyards I and II), the West Asi Gate was and is the functional entrance to the site, providing easier access for staff and special guests. In fact, according to Niu, the name “Asi” is a Chinese transliteration of a Manchu term meaning *yuanmen* 轅門, or front gate of a government office.³¹² The gates are flanked by long, gabled-roof *chaofang* that make up the rest of the west and east walls of the courtyard. The other major structures in the courtyard are the Drum and Bell Towers, in the southwest and southeast sectors, and the two Octagonal Stele Pavilions in the northwest and northeast sectors. Let us progress with a more detailed examination of some of these buildings, focusing on how they relate to the outer mandala model and the language of imperial symbolism.

Gate of Luminous Peace (*Zhaotaimen* 昭泰門)

The colorfully tiled, triple gateway of the Gate of Luminous Peace beckons visitors moving steadily down the tree-lined walkway of Courtyard II, yet another marker of progress deeper into the monastery’s interior. (Fig. 14) As in the Forbidden City, where greater depth is equivalent to greater exclusivity (in that case, closer physical space to the emperor), greater

³¹¹ Measurements are taken from Google Earth. Texts all give slightly different measurements.

³¹² Niu, *Yonghegong*, 229.

depth at Yonghegong indicates greater physical proximity to the sacred, culminating in the presence of the Bodhisattva Maitreya.³¹³

During the site's earlier incarnation as the mansion of Prince Yong, this was the location of the mansion's South Chaofang, a timber-frame building where officials would wait to be summoned by the prince.³¹⁴ That structure was removed when the site was rebuilt as a temple, and this formal brick and tile gateway replaced it.³¹⁵ The width of the central gateway of the Gate of Luminous Peace is the same as the width of the path through Courtyard II and is oriented on the same axis. If the central gate doors are closed, as they would have been in the Qing period unless the emperor were on site, the red gate door would become the converging point of the lines of the path. Today, however, the gates are left open, and a visitor can see into Courtyard III. The visual terminus is now the red walls and gilded arches of the Gate of Harmony and Peace at the north end of the courtyard, framed in the Gate of Luminous Peace.

The Gate of Luminous Peace is of a type known as a "glazed-tile decorative gate" (*liuli huamen* 琉璃花門) and is the first such gate a visitor encounters at Yonghegong. Such gates are common at Qing imperially patronized sites, and are seen throughout the Forbidden City and at the imperial retreat and temples at Chengde.³¹⁶ Such gates are made of stuccoed brick and tile, but the tiles imitate the wooden members of the façade of a timber-frame structure. The Gate of Luminous Peace is not the largest or most elaborate of such gates, but in the hierarchy of Qing imperial architecture, its yellow roof tiles, glazed tile decorations, and imperial name plaque clearly announce an entryway of some significance.

³¹³ For a discussion of what he calls the "patterns of depth" and the symbolic value of space and access in Qing imperial architecture, see Zhu, *Chinese Spatial Strategies*, 97-148.

³¹⁴ Du Jianye, *Palace of Harmony* (Xianggang: Yazhou yi shu chu ban she, 1994), 14.

³¹⁵ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 164.

³¹⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 228. Good comparative examples from the Forbidden City include the Gate of Imperial Supremacy (*Huangjimen* 皇極門), which has a similar series of separated gates and staggered roofs, and the Gate of Mental Cultivation (*Yangxinmen* 養心門), which has similar tile decorations.

The gate is redolent with imperial symbolism, beginning with the nine roof sections that cover the three gate openings. Below the roof, the large, red front panels of the central gate include large, colorful tile relief sculptures in a long, cusped oval shape, representing the motif called “Two Dragons Sporting with a Pearl” (*erlong xizhu* 二龍戲珠), that we saw earlier in the pailou decorations. (Fig. 80) In it, a rising dragon on the right and a descending dragon on the left revolve around a central longevity (*shou* 壽) symbol. The symbol is roughly the same size as four white “pearls” that appear at the cardinal points of the relief. This combination of symbols is described as auguring the “descent of both happiness and longevity” (*fushou shuangjiang* 福壽雙降).³¹⁷

The Name

Hanging under the eaves of the Gate of Luminous Peace and centered over the opening is a wooden name plaque (*pai* 牌) of a standardized type seen at the Forbidden City and other Qing sites (Fig. 81). As we will see in the later buildings on the central axis, such plaques can be extremely ornate, with complex, gilded carvings. This one is comparatively simple, with a gold-outlined red frame surrounding a blue ground with raised, gilded writing, the individual words mounted to the background. Like the majority of inscriptions at Yonghegong, the Chinese characters are written in a calligraphic style reminiscent of that of the Qianlong emperor.³¹⁸ However, unlike the name plaques in the Forbidden City, which name most structures in Manchu script on the right and Chinese on the left, the names at Yonghegong are in all four official

³¹⁷ Wei, *Yonghegong manlu*, 32. Du, *Palace of Harmony*, 15.

³¹⁸ Niu states that the plaque was written by the Qianlong emperor. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 228. I would clarify that this refers only to the Chinese. The emperor in 1744 was certainly bilingual in Chinese and Manchu, but had only begun his study of Mongolian in 1743, and was not to study Tibetan until 1776. Berger, *Empire*, 38. Furthermore, the Chinese characters reflect a style, the emperor’s, whereas the other three scripts seem identical with standard scribal or printed forms.

languages (from right to left Manchu, Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian), a tribute to the multicultural character of the site.

The Manchu reads *Genggiyen elhe duka* “Gate of Enlightened Peace.”³¹⁹ Lessing translates the Chinese as “Illuminating-lofty [gate],” but translates the name in the other languages as “Gate of Resplendent Bliss.”³²⁰ He suggests that that they give what he terms the “face value” of the Chinese characters, suggesting that the Chinese name of the gate was created first, and that the names in the other three languages are translations of it. He makes a similar statement about the texts of the Yonghegong Stele inscription.

For the Chinese name, *Zhaotaimen* 昭泰門, *zhao* 昭 is usually translated as “bright, clear,” and *tai* 泰 “peace.” Accordingly, one Yonghegong publication translates the two terms separately as “Gate of Clarity and Peace.”³²¹ Another translates the name as I have adopted it, “Gate of Luminous Peace,”³²² taking the first character as an adjective as is done, for example, with the standard translation of the Forbidden City’s Hall of Supreme Harmony. I prefer this translation as the equivalent Manchu term on the name plaque, *genggiyen*, also acts as an adjective, whereas in the Gate of Harmony and Peace, immediately to the north, the Manchu name is made up of two nouns and translated accordingly.

For the term *zhao* 昭, Lessing suggests Confucian associations, with reference to the Yonghegong Stele inscription that uses the term “*zhao shi* 昭事” (“to illustriously serve”) to refer to the Qianlong emperor’s following the precedent set by his father in turning the former

³¹⁹ Lessing transliterates the Manchu, Tibetan and Mongolian names as Ma. *Genggiyen ehengge* [sic] *duka*, T. *Hod-lan bde-bai sgo*, and M. *Gereltü amughulang egüde*. For the Manchu transliteration, I suspect a misprint, oversight or perhaps effaced plaque as his second term “*ehengge*” means ‘bad, evil.’ This word on the plaque today clearly reads “*elhe*” or ‘peace,’ more in accord with his accurate translation. Lessing does note that the Manchu on the plaque of the Gate of Harmony and Peace is effaced and unreadable. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 15.

³²⁰ Ibid., 7.

³²¹ Du, *Palace of Harmony*, 14.

³²² Wang, *Lamasery*, map, n.p.

residences of his own father, the Kangxi emperor, into temples. Niu does not gloss *zhao*, but interprets *tai* on the basis of the *tai* 泰 hexagram (No. 11 |||||, meaning “peace,”) in the *Yijing* 易經. This matches the comparable Manchu term in the name plaque, *elhe* (peace).

Beyond simply meaning “peace,” *tai* is a term with imperial associations as well, beginning with Mt. Tai 泰山, one of the Five Sacred Peaks, a holy mountain used in state rituals and rich with imperial symbolism. Furthermore, I suspect that, given the Qianlong emperor’s love of complex wordplay, there may be further imperial symbolism found in the *tai* hexagram itself. Like the emperor’s role uniting Heaven and Earth, *tai* ||||| unites the Heaven (*qian* 乾) and Earth (*kun* 坤) trigrams.³²³ Although it predates the Qianlong era, this *qian-kun* pairing is found architecturally in the plan of the Forbidden City, where the axial, formal buildings of both the Outer and Inner Court suggest two sets of three unbroken lines (*qian*: Heaven, *yang*, male), and the twelve courtyard compounds of the imperial women east and west of the axis suggest two sets of three broken lines (*kun*: Earth:, *yin*, female). A better-known example of the emperor’s *Yijing* wordplay is found in a visual pun used in Qianlong-era seals and in decorative glyphs in works of court decorative art: the *qian* trigram flanked by dragons (*long* 龍), creating a visual pun on Qianlong 乾隆, the second character (*long*) different but of the same pronunciation. Passing under these loaded terms and the array of familiar imperial symbolism on the gate we enter the next courtyard.

³²³ The other combination of *qian* and *kun*, the *pi* 否 hexagram (No. 12), means ‘obstruction,’ which I suspect would be inauspicious.

Courtyard III, the Courtyard of the Gate of Harmony and Peace (Yonghemenyuan 雍和門院)

One of the features of formal Qing imperial architecture, particularly at the Forbidden City, is a sense of a vast space made up of familiar architectural elements, their seemingly infinite recombination and endless repetition creating a sense of awe in the visitor. However, a formal site like the Forbidden City, although overwhelming in the specifics, has an almost numbing sameness. Yonghegong, although originally a palace, over time became more akin to informal Qing imperial architecture as found in Yuanmingyuan that is characterized by infinite variety and continual surprise.

Progressing through the physical space of Yonghegong provides a frequent alternation of concealment and revelation, of suggestion and disclosure. In the first three courtyards, the spatial design is akin to that found in “scholar’s gardens” or imperial residential gardens in that the experience of a larger space is magnified by preceding it with a more constricted space. This plan is often likened to the small opening of a magical bottle-gourd whose interior encompasses an entire world. We have seen this in the small gate at the street entrance to Courtyard I, in the transition from the wide, dramatic spaces and massive, colorful pailou of Courtyard I to the enclosed, tree-lined path of Courtyard II. The next transition involves passing through the Gate of Luminous Peace, moving from the narrow Courtyard II, which feels even narrower due to the tree-bordered path, and into the significantly wider Courtyard III, a change from a space roughly 37 meters wide, and a roughly 8 meter-wide path, into the roughly 80 meter-wide Courtyard III.

In Courtyard III, one immediately perceives the wider space; however, the full dimensions of the courtyard cannot be clearly grasped immediately because of modern modifications to the courtyard that make it more park-like. The initial view is obstructed by two

large “islands” of trees and bushes placed roughly ten meters into the courtyard and eight meters apart on either side of the path along the central axis.³²⁴ Large trees, some very old and clearly visible in historical photographs, and other plantings are found throughout the courtyard, distributed in a roughly symmetrical way. These organic forms soften the otherwise strictly symmetrical distribution of the paired permanent structures in the courtyard. Most dramatically, in the summer the full foliage of the trees and bushes divides up the interior of the courtyard creating pockets of space off of the main axis, and giving the courtyard the atmosphere of a quiet city park even when filled with many visitors. Since the restoration and opening of the site to the public in 1981, benches have been placed throughout the courtyard, particularly around the many trees, and visitors can enjoy a rest in the shade on their way in or out of the site.³²⁵

This courtyard is most famously used for the main part of a ritual performance for which Yonghegong is renowned: the ritual exorcisms called *cham* (T. 'cham) in Tibetan, and known popularly in Beijing as “*dagui* 打鬼” or ‘ghost-beating’ dances, or more properly *Jingang qumoshen wu* 金剛驅魔神舞 (‘Vajra Demon-expelling Dances’) (Fig. 109). They were called “Devil Dances” by early twentieth century Westerners in Beijing. The term used most often by Chinese scholars is *tiaobuzha* 跳布札, an admixture of Chinese *tiao* 跳 (dance) and transliterated Mongolian term for *cham*, *buzhake* 布札克.³²⁶ The dance is a rich public spectacle, performed at Yonghegong once a year over a period at the end of the first lunar month.³²⁷ The ritual involves chanting, music, and dramatic performances by masked monks dressed in colorful

³²⁴ These central plantings are not visible in photos of the courtyard in the early twentieth century. See Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, plate VI.

³²⁵ Courtyard III is in fact the only courtyard with numerous benches. In the other courtyards of the site, visitors sit on the edges of the stone bases of the buildings or on steps. I suspect that this lack of benches, which is also the case in the Forbidden City, is primarily to encourage crowd flow through the site, but in the case of Yonghegong may also be due to the tight spaces in the other courtyards.

³²⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 536.

³²⁷ It is performed from the 23rd day of the first month to the first day of the second month. Ibid., 535.

costumes, and is a paradoxical combination of the sophisticated and the slapstick. It was also suffused with symbolism from both mesocosm and macrocosm.

In her discussion of *cham* dances in Mongolia, Berger highlights the flexibility of interpretation and potential for multicultural resonances that these performances provided.³²⁸ She notes that along with the expected Buddhist deities, traditional figures from Mongolian shamanism and folklore appear. A number of characters, however, would have been familiar to Chinese audiences, and particularly to the multiculturally aware Qing elite: King Kashin (also Kashin Khan) of Kashmir and his sons, also identified as the Chinese monk Hvashang Mahāyāna (T. *hwa shang ma hā yā na*), who is reminiscent of the jolly Chinese monk Budai Heshang and is often portrayed surrounded with happy children (connections that will be detailed in Chapter Eight); the White Old Man (M. *Čaghan ebügen*, or *Tserendug*) who is reminiscent of the Chinese God of Longevity, Shoulao 壽老; with a white beard and large cranium; and finally King Geser, who we have already seen as a Mongolian equivalent of Guandi.

Naquin notes that while these rituals are recorded in Beijing as early as 1700, it was not until after 1900 that they began to be performed at Yonghegong, perhaps due to the destruction of one earlier venue, Zhantansi 旃檀寺 (known in English as the Sandalwood Buddha Temple), during the Boxer Uprising.³²⁹ Niu states further that after 1900 the ritual was only performed at four Beijing sites: Yonghegong, Zhongzhengdian 中正殿 (the center for Tibetan Buddhist ritual in the Forbidden City), Heisi 黑寺 and Huangsi 黃寺, two other Tibetan Buddhist temples north

³²⁸ Berger and Bartholomew, *Mongolia*, 64-5.

³²⁹ Naquin, *Peking*, 589 and n. 85. The ritual is described in some detail in Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 395-412; Wei, *Yonghegong manlu*, 183-197; Niu, *Yonghegong*, 535-543. For references by early twentieth-century Western visitors, see Arlington and Lewisohn, *In Search of*, 195-6; Bredon, *Peking*, 180-81.

of the city walls.³³⁰ There was a cessation of performances from 1957 until 1988 when performances resumed.³³¹

Another annual ritual at Yonghegong is the serving of *labazhou* 腊八粥 (12th Month 8th Day Porridge) to the public.³³² It was not a Tibetan or Mongolian tradition, but adopted from Chinese culture. The porridge was made up of multiple ingredients, including rice, millet, and various kinds of nuts, seeds and fruits. The tradition of making this porridge was given an ancient Buddhist origin story, connected with the gruel that Śākyamuni ate before becoming enlightened, a day celebrated in China on the eighth day of the twelfth month. In Qing Beijing, the court and other members of the elite presented gifts of the porridge, and Yonghegong was particularly famous for it, with monks at the site making up huge batches of it to be served. This was an annual practice until 1937, and has recently been restarted at the site.³³³ The large cauldron on display near the Drum Tower was originally used for the serving of *labazhou* to the public.

General Symbols Found in the Architectural Decoration

Courtyard III is the first time a visitor to Yonghegong encounters examples of architecture, and a brief overview of general architectural symbolism at the site is appropriate. The outer mandala is made up of a great variety of buildings with significant differences in form, function and symbolic value. However, as products of the Qing court, they share certain similarities, including their basic structural character as timber-frame architecture, their display

³³⁰ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 538.

³³¹ Ibid., 539.

³³² Ibid., 554-57.

³³³ See “Yonghegong de labazhou yu shezhou huodong” 雍和宫的腊八粥与舍粥活动 (“Yonghegong’s *labazhou* and *shezhou* activities”), Yonghegong website, October 29, 2008, <http://www.yonghegong.cn/2008-10/29/content_16685565.htm. >

of architectural elements and decorations that indicate their status in the imperial architectural hierarchy, and finally their use of a standardized imperial vocabulary of painted decorations.³³⁴

Although some clearly Buddhist-inspired painted motifs, such as the “Three Jewels,” were used widely in the decorations of both palaces and temples, Yonghegong’s role as a court-sponsored Tibetan Buddhist monastery led to a mixture of imperial, Buddhist and specifically Tibetan Buddhist motifs alternating in the painted decorations throughout the site. I will describe in some detail the decorations first encountered on the Drum and Bell Towers in Courtyard III as an example of the balanced alternation of imperial and Buddhist motifs that will be found in buildings throughout Yonghegong.

In the decorations on the pailou and the Gate of Luminous Peace, we have already seen a number of strictly imperial motifs, such as “Two Dragons Sporting with a Pearl,” and “The Dragon and Phoenix Harbinger Prosperity.” On the Bell and Drum Towers, at the center of the column-top-ties³³⁵ are gold-painted “Two Dragons Sporting with a Pearl” designs, spiraling floral motifs³³⁶ in the inner-side zones³³⁷ of the beams, and in the outer-end zones³³⁸ of the beams are the *viśvavajra* motifs already seen in the pailou. (Fig. 82) Although the Tibetan Buddhist *viśvavajra* is quite abstract, at the center of the short column-top-tie in the end bays are undeniably Tibetan Buddhist apotropaic ornamentations: three syllable *dharani* or mantras in decorative Tibetan Lantsa script surrounded by whirling flower motifs. On the column-top-ties the dragon motif in the center of the east and west sides of the tower is replaced on the north and south sides with a Tibetan mantra, here the ubiquitous mantra of Avalokiteśvara (“*Om mani padme hum hri*”) also in Tibetan Lantsa script. The *visvavajra* is replaced with a dragon, and the

³³⁴ For this hierarchy, see Liang, *Qing Shi Ying Zao Ze Li*. See also Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 172, n. 2.

³³⁵ *da'e fang* 大額枋.

³³⁶ *xuanzi caihua* 旋子彩畫.

³³⁷ *zaotou* 藻頭, popularly called *zhaotou* 找頭.

³³⁸ *gutou* 箍頭.

mantra in the beam on the end bays is also exchanged with a dragon motif. (Fig. 17) In the rest of each elevation on each side of the Bell and Drum Towers the decoration of the main beams alternates the central motif going up (dragons, mantra, dragons, mantra) with the smaller side motifs alternating similarly (*visvavajra*/ mantra, dragons, etc.). A similar alternation in motifs, imperial and Buddhist, is seen on the same type of beam as one moves around the building.

Moving up to the bracket section, the brackets themselves alternate with the ‘Three Jewels’ motifs (*sanbao* 三寶) on the recessed bracket filler board.³³⁹ (Fig. 83). Just above the brackets is the cantilevered-eave crossbeam³⁴⁰ decorated with the “Eight Buddhist Symbols of Good Fortune” (*bajixiang* 八吉祥, or *fojiao babao* 佛教八寶), and above that the cantilevered-eave purlin³⁴¹ is decorated with the mantra of Avalokiteśvara on the east and west sides, with dragons on the north and south sides. Above this are the round end-rafters (or eave-rafters),³⁴² painted with “Dragon’s Eye Gem” designs (*longyan baozhu* 龍眼寶珠). Just below the drip tiles, the square, flying rafter³⁴³ ends are painted with Buddhist swastikas (*wanzi* 萬字).

Buddhist symbols such as the ‘Three Jewels’ and swastika motifs are a standard part of the decoration of Qing imperial architecture. For example, buildings in the courtyard of the Hall of Supreme Harmony at the Forbidden City are structures not particularly associated with Buddhism, yet the ‘Three Jewels’ motif appears on the “bracket filler boards,” and images of the “Eight Buddhist Symbols of Good Fortune” appear on the ‘bearing board’ above the ‘column-top tie.’³⁴⁴ The ‘Three Jewels’ motif also appears on the bracket filler boards decorating the Confucius Temple across the street from Yonghegong, perhaps a nod to the sage’s bodhisattva

³³⁹ *diangongban* 墊枋板.

³⁴⁰ *tiaoyanfang* 挑檐枋.

³⁴¹ *tiaoyanheng* 挑檐桁.

³⁴² *chuantou* 椽頭.

³⁴³ *feiyan chuan* 飛檐椽.

³⁴⁴ Yu, et al., *Palaces of the Forbidden City*, Figs. 382, 268.

status at the Qing court or perhaps simply a standard decorative motif. In the same way that symbols of Buddhist origin found their way into Chinese decorative arts in general, in part for their auspicious and apotropaic character, Buddhist symbols were also incorporated into the general vocabulary of arts produced for the court. Even the Qing court uniform for military and civil officials incorporated long necklaces based on the design of Buddhist rosaries,³⁴⁵ and the Eight Auspicious symbols are ubiquitous in court art, sometimes mixed with the symbols of the Eight Daoist Immortals. However, specifically Tibetan Buddhist motifs, such as the mantras in Lantsa script and the *visvavajra* motifs, are not surprisingly much more prevalent at Yonghegong and other Tibetan Buddhist temples in the capital, and it is the careful, balanced alternating of imperial and Tibetan Buddhist motifs that points to the message of intertwined religious and state authority that the court seems to have been projecting at sites like Yonghegong.

The East and West Octagonal Stele Pavilions (Dong, Xi bajiao paiting 東西八角牌亭) (1744)

The East and West Octagonal Stele Pavilions are located in the northeast and northwest corners of Courtyard III, 10 meters north of the Bell and Drum Towers, and by mirroring these locations create a sense of symmetry and balance in the courtyard. (Fig. 18). The buildings are multifaceted architectural gems; their decorative and structural complexity, as well as their openness and wide stone platforms, beckon to the visitor. Once in their proximity, the pavilions' most important function becomes apparent: housing the stone stelae with the monastery's 1744 inaugural inscription, simply titled *Yonghegong Stele Inscription* 雍和宮牌文.

Prominently displayed stone stelae are a common feature at Chinese temples and other sites, where they stand alone or in sets, in the open air or as here protected by dedicated pavilions.

³⁴⁵ John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 134-38.

They have an importance that far outweighs their relative size when compared to the architectural edifices that surround them. Stele inscriptions detail the legends and history of temple founding, records of building, repair and reconstruction, and, perhaps most importantly in the social milieu of literate elites, which patron or patrons provided support.³⁴⁶ Like pailou inscriptions and building names discussed previously, stele inscriptions further situate temples in the “imperishable” milieu of the written word, and for the Qianlong emperor stelae presented yet another opportunity to make his mark on that timeless realm. The pavilions and stelae are identical but for the language of the inscriptions on the front faces: the east stele displays the text in Manchu on the right and Chinese on the left; the west stele gives it in Tibetan on the right and Mongolian on the left. This relative placement east and west roughly reflects the Qing cultural geography diagrammed by Millward and noted in Chapter Two.

The Inscription and the Stelae

Lessing provides the only published English translation of the text of the *Yonghegong Stele Inscription*.³⁴⁷ In his introduction to the translation he notes that it is not to be considered a “technical” translation, and that a fuller annotated version would have to be forthcoming, which unfortunately was never completed. He also notes that he followed the Manchu text when the Chinese text was overly complex, suggesting that Lessing was using the Manchu as a kind of gloss of the Chinese, a common practice among Sinologists of the era. Lessing is quick to analyze the text in relation to what I am calling the mesocosm, pointing to the skillful diplomacy involved in crafting the texts not only in the four languages but also in the literary styles and

³⁴⁶ For an in depth analysis of this phenomenon in the late Ming period see Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University and Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1993).

³⁴⁷ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 9-13.

using cultural metaphors appropriate to each.³⁴⁸ Although he asserts that he is “suspending judgment as to their comparative literary merits,” he characterizes the Chinese as “flowery” and “larded” with historical and literary references, a description that may be true in general of formal Chinese texts *vis-à-vis* the others, but is certainly true to anyone familiar with the Qianlong emperor’s somewhat pedantic literary style. The Manchu text to Lessing is more reflective of the “rationalistic” Manchus and is a simplified version of the Chinese, lacking specific Buddhist terminology,³⁴⁹ whereas in the Mongolian and Tibetan texts “...Buddhist imagery spreads out its dazzling riches.”³⁵⁰

Furthermore, the Chinese text, like certain of the pailou inscriptions already discussed, presents a message that is simultaneously Buddhist and Confucian, what Lessing describes as “really a hymn on filial piety.”³⁵¹ In form, however, it imitates the structure of a sutra, beginning with a prose section, then shifting into a series of poems (S. *gatha*), in this case eight quatrains made up of four four-character couplets. While the poetry blends filial humility and Buddhist imagery throughout, the prose section is more introductory. After noting the renaming of the site upon the accession of the Yongzheng emperor, its later use as the temporary resting place for the emperor’s coffin while his tomb was completed, and its use as an ancestral shrine, the text turns to precedents for the transformation of former imperial residences into temples. The prose section concludes by equating the Yongzheng emperor with Śākyamuni Buddha,³⁵² and then

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 12-13. Berger, in a chapter on the multilingual and multicultural character of the Qing court, also discusses the text of the inscription in relation to how it was expressed differently in the four languages. Berger, *Empire*, 34.

³⁴⁹ What Lessing refers to as “the technical language of Buddhism.” Of course, the major translation project of the Tibetan Kangyur and Tengyur into Manchu was not complete until 1794, so perhaps the technical vocabulary was not as developed in 1744. See Zhang Hongwei 章宏偉, “The Title, Publisher, and Dates of Translation and Printing of the *Qingwen fanyi quan zangjing*,” *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies*, no. 2 (2008): 311-355

³⁵⁰ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 12.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 13. The rest of this paragraph summarizes Lessing’s translation on pp. 9-12.

³⁵² Rendered in the text as 帝釋 *dishi*, which Lessing translates as “King Çākṣyamuni, but which I assume is a Chinese translation of the Tibetan epithet for the Buddha, *bcom ldan ‘das*, itself a translation into Tibetan of the

humbly introduces the poetry using language borrowed from Confucian texts.³⁵³ In florid simile and metaphor to which no summary can do justice the young Qianlong emperor expresses his boundless respect and gratitude to his father, as well as demonstrates a great facility with Buddhist concepts and terminology. The subtext of the inscription is clear: the emperor is a devoted son and pious Buddhist, as well as legitimate heir to the throne, combining the twin legitimating strands of heredity and virtue.

Turning to the stone stelae themselves, the message is firmly incorporated into a conspicuously imperial medium, surrounded by dragons and dragon-like beasts. The interior of each pavilion is quite simple and dominated by the massive form of the marble stele and its base, its size magnified by the relatively small interior space (Fig. 84). Like most Qing imperial stele, the tall, rectangular stone slab rests on the back of a massive *baxia* 霸下, sometimes called a tortoise-dragon (Figs. 85-6). The *baxia* is one of nine dragon-like creatures known as the ‘nine sons of the dragon’ (*long sheng jiu zi* 龍生九子), that appear frequently as decorative motifs in very specific places. The *baxia* was known for being able to bear heavy weights, making it an appropriate base decoration for stele.³⁵⁴

The body of the tortoise-dragon is a large, ovoid shape with stylized features, the sections of the shell rendered in low relief and the legs and tail more three-dimensionally, if somewhat disproportionally. Its open-mouthed face is more dramatically and sculpturally rendered, and reaches to within touching distance of the front doorway. From the front, a viewer can see the text on the front face of the stele, framed by elaborately carved reliefs of dragons seeking pearls.

Sanskrit *bhagavan*, often translated into English as “lord,” therefore the typical construction “Lord Buddha.” “Bhagavan,” *Rigpa Shedra*, last updated February 1, 2011, <<http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Bhagavan>>.

³⁵³ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 10.

³⁵⁴ Paludan asserts that the oldest example of a *baxia* stele base is at the Fan Min tomb (Han, 205 CE) in Sichuan. Ann Paludan, *The Chinese Spirit Road: The Classical Tradition of Stone Tomb Statuary* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1991) 50.

(Fig. 87) At the top surrounding the title of the stele is the largest and highest-relief dragon, another of the “nine sons” known as a *bixi* 赑屭, famous for its love of literature. These reliefs continue on the sides of the stele, taking the form of a single, five-clawed imperial dragon flying upward on each side (Fig. 88). The rear panel of the stele remains blank, perhaps left open to the possibility of a later imperial inscription that never materialized.

Modern Messages

The last element of the courtyard to be addressed is an interesting modern counterpart of the imperial stele pavilions, much like the relationship of the red banners in Courtyard II to pailou. On the east side of the courtyard in front of the *chaofang* to either side of the central gate are strips of earth planted with grass and three large trees each (Fig. 89). Today, on the side of these strips facing the courtyard are six permanent display boards used as part of the didactic mission of the Yonghegong administration. In 2005, they were dedicated to presenting photographs of the Eleventh Panchen Lama, Gyaincain Norbu (T. *Chos-kyi Rgyal-po*) and describing his approval by the PRC government, his status in Tibetan Buddhism, and four previous visits to Yonghegong to perform ceremonies.

These display boards are consistent with what appears to be a rule of thumb if not a policy at Yonghegong in regard to politically sensitive topics: do not address the controversy. In this case, no mention is made of the international controversy over the selection of Eleventh Panchen Lama and the disappearance of the other candidate, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima (T. *dge 'dun chos kyi nyi ma*), who had been selected by the exiled Fourteenth Dalai Lama.³⁵⁵ This is in contrast to frequent pronouncements in the Chinese media that invariably confront the opposing claims directly, and interpret the actions of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in a negative light. As we

³⁵⁵ For details, see Isabel Hilton, *The Search for the Panchen Lama* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000) and Gilles van Grasdorff, *Hostage of Beijing: The Abduction of the Panchen Lama* (Shaftesbury, Dorset [England]: Element, 1999).

will see later in the site, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is in fact a presence at Yonghegong, albeit only in photographs and references that predate his 1959 exile to India.

Gate of Harmony and Peace (Yonghemmen 雍和門) or Hall of Heavenly Kings (Tianwangdian 天

王殿) (1694)

The main hall of Courtyard III is the Gate of Harmony and Peace located on the north side of the courtyard on the central axis of the site. (Fig. 19) Although the Gate of Harmony and Peace is a substantial hall itself, it originally functioned as the main, formal gate to the residential section when the site was a mansion and Yongzheng-era ‘travelling palace.’ Like all of the axial halls of the palace section, the basic structure of the building was not changed dramatically when the site was rebuilt as a monastery. The hall is built on a raised stone platform, and is five-bays wide and two irregularly spaced bays deep, roughly thirty by twelve meters. This is a plan referred to as “five visible, ten hidden” (*mingwu anshi* 明五暗十), meaning that the structure has five visible bays viewed from the exterior, but the interior is made up of two rows of five bays, creating an interior space of ten bays.³⁵⁶ The deeper front bay (roughly eight meters deep) makes space for the sculptures housed in the gate.

The hall has a hip-and-gable roof with imperial yellow tiles, and the status of the hall is further indicated by the five ‘walking beasts’ roof ornaments and the specific bracket types.³⁵⁷ (Fig. 90). These indicate that the hall is of a similar status to the Bell and Drum Towers and the Octagonal Stele Pavilions in the courtyard preceding the hall, and to the Hall of Eternal Protection that marks the end of the palace section. The façade is faced with red-painted wood,

³⁵⁶ This is described in Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 165.

³⁵⁷ A type called *danqiao zhongang* 單翹重昂 brackets.

and the openings have arched doorways and windows.³⁵⁸ (Fig. 19) The cusped, arched openings are described as “lotus-petal shaped” and are outlined with carved, gilded decorative frames.³⁵⁹ The gilding gives the frame decorations the appearance of stylized flames from a distance, but closer inspection reveals them to be spiraling vine motifs. The doors themselves are decorated with the gilded metal decorations used on large gate doors at imperial sites, including the nine rows of nine door bosses (*mending* 門釘) exclusive to imperial use. (Fig. 91) The number nine reappears in the nine marble steps leading up to the top of the structure’s stone platform. Other decorations on the doors include gilded ‘beast face’ (*shoumian* 獸面) handles. Here they are mounted for aesthetic effect, and are too high to be used. They require smaller handles to be mounted beneath, but painted red to blend in with the door. Also similar to imperial palaces, there are two large bronze lion sculptures in front of the gate to either side in the standard pairing of male on the east and female on the west. (Figs. 92 and 93) These lions bear a very close resemblance in size and style to the two gilt bronze lions that guard the Gate of Heavenly Purity (*Qianqingmen* 乾清門), the gate to the residential section of the Forbidden City. (Fig. 94)

This structure is the first at the site with sculptural icons. The Gate of Harmony and Peace is also known as the Hall of Heavenly Kings (*Tianwangdian* 天王殿), a standard feature of many Chinese Buddhist temples that houses statues of these important protector deities. The images of the Four Heavenly Kings are huge, colorfully painted clay sculptures. The gate also houses gilt wood sculptures of the “Hemp-sack Monk,” Budai Heshang 布袋和尚 (often referred to as Mile Pusa 彌勒菩薩, or Maitreya Bodhisattva) facing south from the center of the

³⁵⁸ Arched doorways on *shanmen* are common at Chinese Buddhist temples (e.g. Beijing Miaoyingsi, Dajuesi, Zhihuasi, Longquansi), and may derive from the ancient Indian chaitya arch. Solid wood walls on gate facades seem to be more typical at Qing imperial sites. Examples can be found in the temples at Chengde. See also Sirén, *Imperial Palaces*, Fig. 170.

³⁵⁹ Lessing refers to this design as a ‘cloud-head’ (*yuntou* 雲頭) arch. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 15. Niu uses the term ‘lotus-petal shaped.’ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 230.

gate, and the guardian Skanda (C. *Weituo* 韋馱) facing north from the rear door of the gate. Like the Heavenly Kings, these two are also typical icons in the entrance halls of Chinese Buddhist temples.

The Name

Above the central door, the name of the gate is displayed on a brightly painted plaque carved with nine gilded, five-clawed imperial dragons. (Fig. 95) Because of the similarity of the names of this gate and those of the Palace of Harmony and Peace in the next courtyard, I will just list the names of the gate here, and discuss the names in more detail with the palace below. The Manchu and Chinese texts read:³⁶⁰

Ma.: *Hūwaliyasun hūwaliyaka duka* “Harmonious and United Gate”³⁶¹

C.: *Yonghemmen* “Gate of Harmony and Peace”

Imperial Seal: *Qianlong yu bi* 乾隆御筆 “Qianlong Imperial Calligraphy”

Lessing gives the Tibetan and Mongol as T. *Dgah-ldan byin-chags-sgo* “The Fascinating Gate of Tushita Heaven,” and M. *Eneriltü nairamdakhu egüde* “Gate of Compassionate Harmony.”

³⁶⁰ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 15.

³⁶¹ Taking *hūwaliyaka* as a past participle.

Lamashuo Stele Pavilion (Lamashuopaiting 喇嘛說牌亭), also “Four Scripts Stele Pavilion”

(Siti paiting 四體牌亭) (1792)

Passing through the Gate of Harmony and Peace, the visitor enters Courtyard IV. Passing an impressive Qianlong-era bronze incense burner (Fig. 96) and crossing the raised platform stretching north along the site's axis, we come to the next structure, the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion. Built to house a four-sided stone stele that displays the text of the Qianlong emperor's oft-quoted essay *Lamashuo* in the four languages of the empire, the pavilion is therefore also called the Four Scripts Stele Pavilion (*Sitipaiting* 四體牌亭). Since the text of this essay was discussed in Chapter Three, I will focus briefly here on the architecture of the pavilion.

Although most of the architectural characteristics of the pavilion are typical, its placement at the site and its roof are unusual. Similar square pavilions with red-painted walls and double-eaved roofs are a standard feature of Ming and Qing imperial sites. Large and dramatic examples are found at the tombs of the Ming emperors, and these models were followed at the tombs of the Qing emperors. Other sites with massive stele pavilions contemporary with the *Lamashuo* Pavilion are found among the Eight Outer Temples at Chengde. The three main temples at Chengde, Puningsi 普寧寺 (1755), Putuozongchengmiao 普陀宗乘廟 (1771), and Xumifushoumiao 須彌福壽廟 (1780) all have large, square stele pavilions, each with a bronze incense burner similar to the one at Yonghegong but slightly less ornate.

All of these stele pavilions, like the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion, sit on the central axis of the site. However, they are placed in spots equivalent to Courtyard III at Yonghegong, where the Octagonal Stele Pavilions are located. Moreover, they all have hip and gable roofs. To the best of my knowledge, the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion is the only imperial stele pavilion that has a

pyramidal roof. The significance of these differences will be addressed in the conclusion to this chapter.

Palace of Harmony and Peace (Yonghegong 雍和宮) (1694)

The construction of the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion on the *yudao* platform left a narrow space of about two meters on either side for visitors to pass around the structure. Immediately behind the pavilion is a short flight of three steps up to a twenty-seven meter wide *danchi* platform in front of the next major hall, the Palace of Harmony and Peace. The platform is surrounded by a brick railing covered in yellow, green and blue tiles, with openings on the east and west sides for stone stairways down to the ground level, and an opening at the south for the stairs up from the *yudao* platform. The north side of the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion opens directly onto the *danchi*; the terrace is actually flush with the rear of the pavilion.³⁶² In the center of the *danchi*, in a spot roughly equivalent to the position of the incense burner in the previous platform, stands a large cast bronze sculpture of Mt. Meru (*Xumishan* 須彌山) on a carved marble base. (Fig. 97) In Buddhist cosmology, the mountain is the unfathomably immense, mythical mountain at the center of our world system, and the dwelling place of the gods. The sculpture has an inscription dating it to the Wanli period of the Ming dynasty, but its original location and when it was placed in Yonghegong is currently unknown.³⁶³

The wide *danchi* that the Mt. Meru Model rests on is the front terrace for the next major hall at the site, the Palace of Harmony and Peace. (Fig. 26) The Palace of Harmony and Peace was one of the original structures at the site, built in 1694 as the formal reception hall

³⁶² The *danchi* is discussed in detail in Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 168.

³⁶³ Niu, 220.

(*yin'andian* 銀安殿) for Prince Yong.³⁶⁴ It was given the name Palace of Harmony and Peace in Yongzheng 3 (1725) when the site was turned into a travelling palace and temple. During the 1744 reconstruction, a verandah was added to the façade.³⁶⁵

That the Palace of Harmony and Peace was the largest and most important structure at the site early on is suggested by the rather confusing synecdoche that it creates, as the name of the building in Chinese is *Yonghegong* 雍和宮. To differentiate this building from the site as a whole, it is typically referred to as the *Yonghegongdian* 雍和宮殿 (“Hall of the Palace of Harmony and Peace”) or *Yonghegongdadian* 雍和宮大殿 (“Great Hall of the Palace of Harmony and Peace”). When the site was transformed into a monastic college in 1744, the palace became the equivalent of the main hall in Chinese temples, often called the “Precious Hall of the Great Hero” or “Mahavira Hall” (*Daxiongbaodian* 大雄寶殿), the “great hero” a reference to Śākyamuni. The *Yonghegongdian* was the principal hall used for worship during visits by successive Qing emperors.³⁶⁶

The palace has a single-eaved hip and gable roof with yellow tiles, the edges decorated with seven “walking beasts” and an ‘immortal,’ classifying it among the second-highest ranking imperial structures.³⁶⁷ The bracket structure is of the type called *zhongqiao zhongang* 重翹重昂, the most complex bracket type used at Yonghegong and, combined with the eaves decorations, marks this building as the highest ranking one at the site, although not the largest. The building is stately and impressive, with ornate decoration. The façade is seven bays wide (roughly forty meters), and roughly twenty meters deep, with a one-bay deep verandah (roughly four meters

³⁶⁴ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 170.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 219.

³⁶⁷ The highest level has nine walking beasts. Only the Hall of Supreme Harmony at the Forbidden City has ten.

deep), five doorway openings with latticed doors³⁶⁸ and latticed windows in the end bays above a ‘sill wall’³⁶⁹ covered with green-glazed tiles in the “turtle-shell brocade pattern.”³⁷⁰ The painted decorations follow similar, standard patterns seen in earlier structures, with a combination of imperial and Buddhist symbols, and mantras written in Tibetan script. On the whole, the impression of the exterior of the Palace of Harmony and Peace is similar to that of large imperial palace structures seen at the Forbidden City.

Like the Gate of Harmony and Peace, the interior of the building has irregularly spaced interior bays to allow a larger open area in the front bays. As a ceremonial hall in the prince’s residence this would have allowed greater space for audiences; as a temple building it allows for greater space for the altars. However, an interesting problem arises when a Chinese-style hall such as this one is used for Tibetan Buddhist rituals. Although Chinese Buddhist worshippers face the altar for services, allowing halls that are wider than they are deep, in rituals conducted by Tibetan Buddhist monks, long rows of low tables are arranged perpendicular to the main altar, and Tibetan Buddhist temple interiors are oriented to allow this, deeper than they are wide.³⁷¹ As we will see in the following section of the site, this problem was addressed in the construction of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel, used for daily services at Yonghegong. The Palace of Harmony and Peace, while used by lay worshippers on a daily basis, is used less frequently for larger, formal rituals by the monks at the site.

³⁶⁸ *geshanmen* 格山門.

³⁶⁹ *kanchiang* 檻牆.

³⁷⁰ *guibei jinwen* 龜背錦紋.

³⁷¹ Lessing discusses this in an unpublished manuscript. Ferdinand Lessing, “The Interior of Lamaist Temples,” unpublished manuscript, Alex Wayman and Ferdinand Lessing Manuscript Collection, Naritasan Buddhist Library 成田山仏教図書館, Naritasan Shinshōji Temple 成田山新勝寺, Narita, Japan.

The Name

Above the central doorway on the façade is the nine-dragon name board, identical to the one on the Gate of Harmony and Peace. It reads:

Ma.: *Hūwaliasun hūwalyaka gung* “Harmonious and United Palace”

C.: *Yonghegong* 雍和宮 “Palace of Harmony and Peace”

T.: *dga’ ldan byin chogs gling* “Splendid Heaven of Joy” (i.e. Tushita Heaven)

M.: *Nairalt Nairamdakh Suum*

Imperial Seal: *Qianlong yu bi zhi bao* 乾隆御筆之寶 “Treasure of Qianlong Imperial Calligraphy”

Although I will not provide the Tibetan or Mongolian names for most halls at the site due to my lack of reading knowledge of these languages, I do so here because of the significance of the Tibetan name of this hall. The Tibetan name given to the site, *dga’ ldan byin chogs gling*, “Splendid Heaven of Joy,” explicitly connects Yonghegong with both the macrocosm and mesocosm, referencing as it does Maitreya’s Tuṣita Heaven and the name of Tsongkhapa’s first monastery. Although the Tibetan name is quite different, the Chinese, Manchu and Mongolian names are similar in that they are all related to the princely title (and later reign name) of the Yongzheng emperor in those languages: i.e. *yong* in Chinese, *hūwaliasun* in Manchu, and *nairalt* in Mongolian.

Hall of Eternal Protection (Yongyoudian 永佑殿) (1694)

After exiting the Palace of Harmony and Peace, we enter what is technically Courtyard V, although it is an example of the inutility of the courtyard model in the palace section. The raised *danchi* platform on the axis that links the Palace of Harmony and Peace to the next hall, the Hall of Eternal Protection, is very truncated, only about thirteen meters north-south, and not neatly associated with the east and west buildings of its “courtyard.” (Fig. 50) Crossing this platform and mounting another series of nine steps we come to the hall.

When the site was a residence for Prince Yong, this building was his private chamber for sleep and study (*qinshi* 寢室). It originally had a simple five bay interior, and the façade included a “hanging lotus gate” known as an *yimen* 儀門 (“ceremonial gate”). As noted in the introduction, after the emperor’s death in 1735, his coffin was housed in this hall, and the roof tiles of all of the axial buildings were changed to yellow tiles in accord with this new status. The former sleeping chamber was given the name Hall of Imperial Divinity (*Shenyudian* 神御殿), and it housed the coffin for over a year until the emperor’s interment in the Tailing 泰陵 Tomb in the Western Qing Tombs complex.³⁷² During the 1744 reconstruction, the building was renamed the Hall of Eternal Protection, and dedicated to the protection of the spirit of the deceased emperor. The building plan was also modified at this time. The hanging lotus gate was removed and the building plan was expanded into a “five visible, ten hidden” plan.³⁷³ This expansion extended the building to the south, making the already narrow final courtyard of the palace section, Courtyard V, appear even narrower.

³⁷² Niu, *Yonghegong*, 270.

³⁷³ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 173.

The hall is the smallest of the three axial buildings, five bays (roughly twenty-two meters) wide and three bays (roughly eleven meters) deep. It lacks a verandah, and the interior space is made up of a deep (north-south) central bay (roughly seven meters), and two truncated bays front and rear (roughly two meters deep). The comparatively simple interior uses staggered column spacing to create a large, open space for statues and altars. Like the Gate of Harmony and Peace, it has a single-eaved hip and gable roof with yellow tiles, five ‘walking beasts’ at the tips of the eaves, and the same bracket type used in the gate. The façade of the Hall of Eternal Protection is less grand than that of the Palace of Harmony and Peace, but the decorative program is virtually identical, with latticed doorway openings, windows in the end bays above a ‘sill wall’ section covered with green-glazed “turtle-shell brocade pattern” tiles, and painted decorations combining imperial and Buddhist symbols with dragons and Tibetan mantras.

The Name

The nine-dragon name board appears above the central opening, with the name of the building in the four scripts:

C: *Yongyoudian* 永佑殿 “Hall of Eternal Protection”

Ma.: *Enteheme karmaha diyan* “Eternally Protected Hall”

Imperial Seal: *Qianlong yu bi* 乾隆御筆 “Qianlong Imperial Calligraphy”

As we will see when we return to this building in the inner mandala, the idea of protection referenced in the name of the hall originally related to protecting the spirit of the

deceased Yongzheng emperor whose coffin was housed there temporarily. The deities enshrined within all relate to healing, protection and longevity.

Shrine to Phra Phrom (no longer extant)

For a few decades, an unusual shrine stood in the center of the *danchi* platform in Courtyard V between the Palace of Harmony and Peace and the Hall of Eternal Protection. (Fig. 98) Like the Japanese Soul-summoning Pavilion that used to exist in the Baofang Courtyard, this shrine housed a temporary foreign visitor at Yonghegong, a Thai image of the god Brahma, a Hindu deity particularly popular in Thailand where the deity's name is transliterated as Phra Phrom. The shrine and its icon at Yonghegong were pious copies of a famous original at the Erawan Shrine (Thai: *San Phra Phrom*) in Bangkok. Reflecting Thai style, the shrine was covered in colorful mirror tiles and each side was topped with a pointed Thai arch supported by *naga*-head capitals. According to Bao Hongfei, director of the Yonghegong Administrative Department, the shrine was removed in the 1990s because, as a Thai image, it was incongruous with the rest of the site.³⁷⁴ From a practical and even aesthetic standpoint, although the shrine was analogous to the incense burner and Mt. Meru model placed on the central axis at the center of the *yudao* and other *danchi* platform, the enclosed space of Courtyard V made the area seem smaller, and therefore more crowded with the shrine present. Furthermore, front and center of each major structure at Yonghegong, a low, square-ding shaped incense burner is placed for worshippers. However, in Courtyard V, the incense burner was placed to the side of the Thai

³⁷⁴ Bao Hongfei 鲍洪飞 (鲍洪飛), personal communication, 2005. He was not able at the time to supply the name of the donor or donors of the shrine. Although I have been unable to find much published research on the worship of Phra Phrom, it is particularly popular among Thai and Singaporean Chinese, who most often refer to the deity as the "Four-faced Buddha" (*Simianfo* 四面佛), although Brahma is not technically a buddha. Also, although a form of Brahma was adopted into the Buddhist pantheon very early on, Phra Phrom worship seems to emphasize its Hindu character.

shrine, and oriented towards it and not towards the Hall of Eternal Protection, another incongruity that may have supported its removal.

Conclusion

The garden section at Yonghegong begins with the sylvan second courtyard, a more subtle experience than the spectacle of the Prefatory Courtyard with its open space and ornate pailous. Like the first courtyard, though, the Courtyard of the Imperial Carriage Way acts as a transitional space, providing physical access to the monastic residences at Yonghegong as well as to the ritual areas to the north. On an individual, experiential level, however, the passageway created by the tree-lined path can promote a calm and receptive state of mind, preparing the visitor for what is to be revealed within the ritual core. It is a long walkway through an enclosed, visually subdued corridor: green, shaded and cool in the summer, and in the winter a simple line of empty trees and bushes flanked by long red walls. Even in hectic twenty-first century Beijing, little distracting external noise reaches this inner courtyard. In the summer, the only ambient sounds are the steady buzzing of cicadas interrupted by bird songs.

In the world of Qing imperial symbolism, the messages conveyed by the courtyard were less overt than the pailou inscriptions, and may suggest another kind of transition. The slow and measured passageway into sacred space provided by Courtyard II may be seen as a journey through the mythic past of Buddhist history, the trees and monastic dormitories suggesting the legendary garden-monasteries of ancient India that are so often the setting of Śākyamuni Buddha's sermons in the sutras. Furthermore, although the concept of transitional space is common to religious sites in East Asia, at Yonghegong the first two courtyards together can also be understood as a carefully composed overture, introducing themes important to the major

patrons of the past and present that play out in the site as a whole. The themes found in the Pailou Courtyard are those of the Qianlong emperor, reflecting the centrality of imperial universalism to the message of Yonghegong. The garden section today adds another kind of pailou inscription, the bold and conspicuous red banners that may disturb the serenity of the wooded pathway, but that express key messages of preservation and education that are central to the message of the modern Yonghegong administration. Both speak from a position of authority in the tone of their pronouncements, and the messages are conveyed in a form that suggests official status: the traditional pailou and its contemporary descendent, the long, horizontal red banner, perhaps best known from the examples flanking the portrait of Mao Zedong on the Gate of Heavenly Peace (*Tiananmen* 天安門).

Passing from the Prefatory Courtyard and the tree-lined Courtyard of the Imperial Carriage Way, the visitor enters the palace section, a very different sort of architectural space. It is grand and ornate, enveloping and overwhelming. My interpretation of the structures of courtyards IV and V as the palace section is based on a number of features. First, the main buildings on the central axis, the Gate of Harmony and Peace, the Hall of Harmony and Peace and the Hall of Eternal Protection, were all once actual palaces, the main formal buildings when the site was Prince Yong's mansion. Not surprisingly, the palace section, as a former prince's residence, follows the Qing court regulations governing the layout and buildings of a princely residential compound of Prince Yong's rank, *qinwang* 親王. They retained all of the external architectural characteristics of palaces even after the conversion of the site in 1744. The only external change that references the shift of function from palaces to temple buildings was the addition of Tibetan Buddhist symbols and protective mantras to the decorative painting program.

The second feature that suggests associations with imperial palaces hinges on the unusual characteristics of the *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion. The inaugural stela in the Octagonal Stele Pavilions in Courtyard III appear in the typical location for such stele: the first major courtyard of the site. Even considering that, later in his reign, the emperor's famous self-confidence led to more prominent placement of stela on the central axes of imperially-sponsored sites, why not place the *Lamashuo* Pavilion on that axis in an earlier courtyard, with much more available space than the confines of Courtyard IV? One reason may have been to insert his political message into the daily lives of the monks studying in the surrounding halls of this part of the site, the ostensible audience to whom his message was directed.

But another more subtle message is suggested to me by the use of a pyramid roof. No other Qing stele pavilion that I am aware of uses it. If it is a square pavilion, it always has a hip and gable roof, a lower-ranked type in the Qing architectural hierarchy. The appearance of a smaller, square building with a pyramidal roof, on top of a marble *yudao* platform and in between two larger palaces reminds me of the most prominent example of this particular arrangement of buildings: in the major axial halls of the Forbidden City (Fig. 99).

The sequence appears in the three halls of the outer court, raised on an island-like high marble platform: the Hall of Supreme Harmony, a long rectangular building, the Hall of Central Harmony (*Zhonghedian* 中和殿), a small, square building with a pyramid roof, and the Hall of Preserving Harmony (*Baohedian* 保和殿), a rectangular building, but smaller than the Hall of Supreme Harmony. The arrangement is repeated in the Inner Court, although with somewhat smaller buildings. Again, three halls raised on a high marble platform: the Palace of Heavenly Purity (*Qianqinggong* 乾清宫), the Hall of Union (*Jiaotaidian* 交泰殿), and finally the Palace of Earthly Tranquility (*Kunninggong* 坤寧宮). Finally, just as the Hall of Supreme Harmony is

preceded by the similarly named Gate of Supreme Harmony, and the Palace of Heavenly Purity is preceded by the Gate of Heavenly Purity, the Palace of Harmony and Peace at Yonghegong is preceded by the Gate of Harmony and Peace. I suspect that the fact that this was the former residence of two emperors, and, based on his poems, a place for which the Qianlong emperor had lasting sentiment as the ‘hiding place of the dragon,’ made it appropriate for the Qianlong emperor to create this subtle architectural allusion.

The next chapter, the final chapter addressing the outer mandala, takes us beyond the gardens of the past and the Chinese-style palaces of the present to the high plateau of distant Tibet, and culminates in the even higher Tuṣita Heaven of Maitreya Bodhisattva.

Chapter Six: The Outer Mandala, Part Three: The Plateau Section and the Tuṣita Heaven Section

Introduction

The last two sections of the outer mandala are defined by dramatic spectacle, their visual impact deriving from “exotic” architecture and the theatrical manipulation of space. Continuing our ascent through the physical space of the site and the symbolic space of the outer mandala and the three spheres, we climb up from the palace section and enter into a wide, open courtyard dominated by the Tibetan-inspired architecture of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. (Fig. 55) This is the plateau section, which I have named for the elevated expanses of the Tibetan Plateau, one of the far reaches of the Qing Empire. The style, function, and symbolism of the architecture provide links with Tibet, the source of the political and spiritual legitimacy provided by Tibetan Buddhism, and therefore connect this section to the mesocosm. In the macrocosm, the Hall of the Dharma Wheel is the mandala palace of the *Mañjuḥṣa-Ākravartin*, and a conceptual and spatial link to the Tuṣita Heaven beyond. Finally, in the microcosm, the Hall of the Dharma Wheel is flanked by two towers specially constructed for the 1780 visit of the Sixth Panchen Lama. These buildings reference both the emperor’s physical presence at the site and the presence of that revered lama, who conferred important legitimating initiations upon the emperor during his visit.

Passing through the plateau section the visitor enters what I am calling the the Tuṣita Heaven section of Yonghegong. The magnificent Pavilion of Infinite Happiness is the visual climax of the outer mandala. Its great height is magnified by the relatively enclosed space of Courtyard VII, which also accentuates the width of the building with its two attached towers, the Pavilions of Prolonged Peace (*Yansuige* 延綏閣) and Eternal Health (*Yongkangge* 永康閣). The

Tuṣita Heaven section includes the most overt connections at Yonghegong to the macrocosm in both outer and inner mandalas by representing Tuṣita, the temporary heavenly abode of Maitreya, whose salvific arrival in our benighted world is imminent. The centrality of Maitreya spans the mesocosm and macrocosm in Gelugpa thought, particularly among Qing Mongols, and the role of Maitreya provides teleological justification for the reign of the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*. Additionally, the three central building reference the architectural legacy of the Liao Dynasty (or Khitan Empire, 907–1125), a non-Chinese empire that controlled northern China and was seen by the Qing court as an important predecessor. Concluding the three spheres in the Tuṣita Heaven section, the microcosmic presence of the Qianlong emperor in the outer mandala is announced in a form not seen since the Prefatory Courtyard: the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness is the only building that displays calligraphic panels by the emperor on its facade. Furthermore, wishes for infinite happiness, prolonged peace and eternal health conveyed by the names of the axial trio of buildings could certainly have been understood as directed at the emperor himself, if not at the empire more widely. The outer mandala ends with a fitting and very satisfying architectural flourish, and a final message that will be reinforced when we revisit Yonghegong anew in the inner mandala.

The Plateau Section

Description

The plateau section is made up of a large courtyard (Courtyard VI) surrounded by five buildings. The most impressive and distinctive structure is the Hall of the Dharma Wheel (*Falundian* 法輪殿) to the north, the main, axial building in this section. It is today the primary ritual structure for the monks at Yonghegong, as it was in the eighteenth century, and daily early

morning services continue to be held there. The hall is flanked by two identical, two-storied towers, on the west side by the Ordination Platform Tower (*Jietailou* 戒臺樓, Fig. 58) and on the east by the Panchen Tower (*Banchanlou* 班禪樓, Fig. 57). The courtyard is flanked by the almost identical structures of the Western Side Hall (*Xipeidian* 西配殿, Fig. 59) and the Eastern Side Hall (*Dongpeidian* 東配殿).

Courtyard VI

Courtyard VI makes a dramatic impression. (Fig. 55) After the enclosed, canyon-like spaces of the palace section, the visitor climbs up and passes into a large open courtyard. It is comparable to the other courtyards: no wider (roughly fifty meters), and between twenty and thirty meters deep in comparison with the thirty-five to forty meters deep Courtyard IV and the very shallow Courtyard V at fifteen to eighteen meters deep. However, Courtyard VI seems larger because it is not bisected by a large *yudao/ danchi* platform like those in the earlier courtyards. Also, the buildings on the east and west sides of Courtyard VI are single-storied structures and more of the sky is visible than in the earlier courtyards, where it is blocked by tall trees, two-storied structures, or simply by constricted space.

This open space was not only for visual effect. The interior space of Tibetan Buddhist temple buildings is, for the most part, restricted during ceremonies. For large services, only those monks and lamas involved in the rites are typically allowed inside, and any lay believers or others who attend do so in the courtyard outside of the hall.³⁷⁵ Therefore, a courtyard space such as the one outside the Hall of the Dharma Wheel has an important ritual function.

³⁷⁵ For the smaller daily services today at the site, small groups of lay practitioners are allowed to attend inside the hall. When I attended one such service in the summer of 2005, there were five or six lay people with another outside in the courtyard performing prostrations.

For visitors today, one mitigating factor in this sense of openness in the courtyard is the addition of plantings, including four pine trees and two plots of bamboo, none of which appears in historical photographs of the courtyard. The pine trees are carefully pruned, planted in individual plots in an east-west row, two trees on each side of the central axis of the courtyard. Their height reaches to approximately the height of the eaves of the building, so they do not immediately impede the entering visitor's view of the spectacular roof of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. As relatively young trees, their trunk and branches are not large, and the trees act as a transparent screen, allowing glimpses through to the structure beyond. The two plots of densely planted bamboo are at either side of the stone staircase that spans the three front doorway bays of the hall, and they block the view of most of the outermost bays of the façade. Like the plantings in Courtyard III, these were probably added during the major reconstruction of the 1980s, and along with the strategic placement of benches, create a more inviting, park-like atmosphere at Yonghegong. Their addition was certainly part of the process of moving Yonghegong away from being primarily a religious site with limited public access and towards its new role as tourist attraction and historical and cultural showpiece.

Hall of the Dharma Wheel (Falundian 法輪殿) (1744)

Function

The Hall of the Dharma Wheel (Fig. 55) is a large and magnificent building, structurally complex and ornately decorated. When Yonghegong was Prince Yinzhen's residence, the Inner Bedchamber (*Neiqindian* 內寢殿) of the prince's principal wife, Ulanara 烏喇那拉, stood here.³⁷⁶ The Inner Bedchamber was demolished during the 1744 reconstruction, and The Hall of

³⁷⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 236.

the Dharma Wheel was built from the ground up, unlike the buildings of the palace section that were kept mostly intact after the transformation of the site.

Built specifically for Tibetan Buddhist ritual practices that differed from Chinese practice and required a different kind of space, the Hall of the Dharma Wheel became one of the most important buildings at Yonghegong. Among the standard structures in a Tibetan Buddhist temple, or *gompa* (T. *dgon pa*), is the main prayer hall, or *dukhang* (T. ‘*du khang*), used for both daily services and large ceremonies. The Hall of the Dharma Wheel is such a structure. Rows of low desks extending north and south and filling much of the floor space (Fig. 56) are used by the monks and lamas who chant and play ritual instruments during rites. Since 1924-25, these rites have been performed at the feet of the huge, (6.1 meter high) gilded copper statue of Tsongkhapa installed at that time. The complex roof features three linked roofs with five gabled dormer windows that rise up from the central section. This feature was inspired by Tibetan architecture, making the Hall of the Dharma Wheel perhaps the first architectural cultural hybrid in the Qing period, launching a tradition that eventually produced more renowned and dramatic buildings such as the Potala (*Putuozongchengmiao* 普陀宗乘庙) in Chengde and the European sector (*Xiyanglou* 西洋楼) of the Yuanmingyuan.

The Name

Above the central doorway of the hall is the name board, brightly painted and gilded, with the name of the building in the four scripts:

Chinese: *Falun dian* 法輪殿 (Hall of the Dharma Wheel)

Manchu: *Ging ni kurdun be forgošobure diyan* (Hall of the Turning of the Wheel of Sutras)

Imperial Seal: *Qianlong yu bi* 乾隆御筆 “Qianlong Imperial Calligraphy”

The name can be connected with all three spheres. Śākyamuni set the Dharma wheel in motion with his First Sermon, delivered in the Deer Park at Sarnath, which brought the sentient beings of our Buddhist era into the macrocosm. The mesocosm is evoked because the Qianlong emperor asserted that his father was a manifestation of Śākyamuni, and the filial implications of that claim resonate in a Chinese political idiom. Further mesocosmic significance is found in the Tibetan sources for a type of hall known as a Dharma Wheel (T. *chos 'khor*) hall, noted by Berger. In her discussion of the building of the Qianlong emperor's private Tibetan Buddhist chapel in the Forbidden City, the Pavilion of Raining Flowers, she connects Rölpe Dorjé's plan for the chapel with earlier precedents such as the Golden Temple at Tholing and other monasteries in western Tibet, Samye, and the earlier model at Odantipur, all referred to as Dharma Wheel halls.³⁷⁷ Finally, although the Dharma Wheel in this context is more commonly a symbol of preaching the Dharma, on a microcosmic level, the Dharma Wheel may be a subtle reference to the determining symbol of the Ākavartin, the wheel, embodied by the Qianlong emperor.

³⁷⁷ Berger, *Empire*, 103 and 216, n. 50.

Exterior Architecture

The Hall of the Dharma Wheel is built on a large, cruciform, stone plinth approximately one meter high that occupies a space roughly thirty-four by thirty four meters square. It measures five meters east to west and twenty meters north to south. The hall covers the largest accessible interior floor area at the site: roughly 1,112 square meters total. Structurally, the hall is three separate buildings united by a joined roof and shared interior space. The main, central section is a rectangle seven bays (forty meters) wide and one bay (ten meters) deep. This section is covered by a yellow-tiled, hip-and-gable roof, and the eaves decorated with seven ‘walking beasts’ indicate its status. Like the Gate of Harmony and Peace and the Hall of Eternal Protection, it uses *danqiao zhongang* 單翹重昂 brackets, indicating that the building is slightly lower in status than the Palace of Harmony and Peace despite the equal number of ‘walking beasts.’

The two buildings that are linked to the central section are the portico structures (*baosha* 抱廈) that extend from the north and south, five bays east-west (thirty meters) and one bay (seven meters) north-south. (Fig. 100) These make up the front and rear façades of the building, and are covered with low, “humpbacked rafter” roofs (*juanpeng ding* 卷棚頂) often used with such attached structures. They are also covered with yellow tiles, but in accord with roof status regulations, they have only five ‘walking beasts’ and an ‘immortal’ on their eaves. Each bay of the porticoes, five in the front and one on each side, has a latticed doorway, giving the hall a total of fourteen doorways allowing greater ease of entrance and exit for the numerous participants in the services.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁸ Niu, Yonghegong, 236.

The building is distinguished by the five, ornate gabled dormer windows that rise up from the central hip-and-gable roof and allow light into the hall interior, a feature typical in Tibetan architecture.³⁷⁹ (Fig. 55) At the center of the roof is the largest dormer window, itself covered with a hip-and-gable roof. Since the mid-1920s, it has illuminated the pale face and yellow cap of the Tsongkhapa statue with a soft glow in the otherwise darkened interior. (Fig. 56) On the roof of this central dormer window is a large, vase-shaped, Tibetan-style, gilded finial, with a dark blue enameled, spherical section in the center that is purported to contain relics.³⁸⁰ The other four gabled dormer windows, located at the ordinal directions, are smaller, simpler gabled roofs (*xuanshanding* 懸山頂), with gilded roof finials shaped like Tibetan stupas, or *chörten* (T. *mchod-rten*). All of the finials have small wind-bells attached. The five gabled dormer window roofs have the standard roof decorations, but with three ‘walking beasts’ on each eave ridge, giving the Hall of the Dharma Wheel a combination of three different ranking roof types.

Architectural Sources

The five gabled dormer windows are the most unusual and outstanding feature of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel by the standards of eighteenth-century Chinese architecture. Along with their Tibetan-style finials, they are clear references to Tibetan architecture like that of such major Tibetan monasteries as Tashilhunpo in Shigatse, Kumbum in Qinghai, Ganden near Lhasa, and the Jokhang and Potala palace in Lhasa. The particular configuration of five gabled dormer windows, moreover, is found at the Utse (T. *dBu rtse*) Hall at Samye (T. *Bsam yas*) monastery in Tibet. (Figs. 101-102) As Tibet’s first Buddhist temple, Samye is of great historical importance. Its founding in the eighth century C.E. is attributed to Padmasambhava, a figure revered in Tibet

³⁷⁹ *History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture*, 336.

³⁸⁰ Du, *Palace of Harmony*, 72.

as *Guru Rinpoche* (“Precious Master”) who according to tradition revived the Buddhist teachings that had almost died out after a period of repression. The plan of Samye monastery follows a Buddhist cosmological model with Mt. Meru surrounded by four continents, a plan inspired by Indian monastic colleges at Nalanda and Odantipur.³⁸¹ At Samye, the Utse Hall represents Mt. Meru and the smaller surrounding buildings represent the continents.³⁸² On the roof of the hall, the five dormer windows recapitulate this model, with the central one referring to Mt. Meru. This is the same configuration seen on the Hal of the Dharma Wheel.

Although I have not discovered a specific Qing reference to connect the Utse Hall to the Hall of the Dharma Wheel at Yonghegong, I can provide one for another celebrated Qing temple that was modeled on the Utse Hall: the Mahayana Pavilion (*Dachengge* 大乘閣) at the Puning Monastery (*Puningsi* 普宁寺, “Monastery of Universal Peace”) at Chengde. In his stele inscription made for the founding of the temple in 1755 (only eleven years after the Hall of the Dharma Wheel was completed), the Qianlong emperor notes that Samye was a model for the plan of Puning Monastery and that the Mahayana Pavilion represents Mt. Meru.³⁸³ The emperor further asserts, in typical fashion, that the Puning Monastery plan was actually closer than that of Samye to Indian monastic college models.

Another important parallel of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel with the Utse Hall is the use of a cruciform plan (characterized in Chinese as “*ya* shaped” after the Chinese character *ya* 亚) that echoes the shape of central spaces in Tibetan Buddhist *mandalas*. In *mandalas* the central square shape represents an architectural plan. The square, with its T-shaped gates at the cardinal directions, is in fact only the ground plan of a three-dimensional palace that is to be imagined by

³⁸¹ Amy Heller, *Tibetan Art: Tracing the Development of Spiritual Ideals and Art in Tibet, 600-2000 A.D.* (Milano, Italy: Jaca Book, 1999) 35.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ Anne Chayet, “Architectural Wonderland: An Empire of Fictions,” in James A. Millward, et al., eds., *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004) 38, 49.

the practitioner in visualization practice such as that done in the Kālacakra Tantra system, to which the Kālacakra Hall (*Shilundian* 時輪殿) at Yonghegong is dedicated. At the center of the palace, understood to be the highest point, sits the deity. The four gates, like the dharma wheel, symbolize the extension of the deity's influence in all directions.

Although the Hall of the Dharma Wheel is an example of Chinese timber-frame architecture, attributed to the Qing imperial architects of the Lei family, of all of the buildings at Yonghegong it is the most unusual in the context of Chinese-style palace architecture. This singular character derives from the adaptation of Tibetan characteristics used in the hall: in style, the use of dormer windows and finials borrowed from Tibetan architecture; in ground plan, a shape derived from mandala palace models; and in function, an interior space designed to accommodate Tibetan Buddhist ritual practice. If, however, we look at the hall in the context of Qianlong-era imperial architecture as a whole, as noted above the Hall of the Dharma Wheel is an early example of the culturally hybrid style seen in later, better-known examples from Chengde and the lost Yuanmingyuan.

The Panchen Tower (Banchanlou 班禪樓) and Ordination Platform Tower (Jietailou 戒臺樓)
(1780)

These two towers were the last major buildings made for an important political and religious event at Yonghegong, namely, the visit to the Qing court of the Sixth Panchen Lama, Lobsang Palden Yeshe (T. *Blo-bzang Gpal-ldan Ye-shes*, 1738–1780). The Panchen Tower was constructed as a resting lounge for the Panchen Lama, where he could meditate and instruct in a reasonably intimate setting.³⁸⁴ The Ordination Platform Tower encloses a large ordination

³⁸⁴ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 273.

platform originally used by the Panchen Lama to give Tantric initiations to the Qianlong emperor. (Fig. 103).

The two towers are virtually identical from the outside. They are built on square, stone platforms twenty meters to a side. The buildings are five bays to a side with a doorway in the central bay on the north and south sides. The other bays all have latticed windows. The upper story of both towers is surrounded by a verandah; it is clearly decorative in the Ordination Platform Tower (since there is no second floor) and this may also be decorative in the Panchen Tower, as it looks too short for comfortable use. The upper story has a hip and gable roof, and a skirt roof covers the lower story. Both roofs have grey tiles and five ‘walking beasts,’ but no ‘immortal’ at the ends of the eaves of both roofs. The lack of imperial yellow tiles on the towers, despite the imperial presence in the ordination platform tower, may simply be explained by the fact that the towers were built for the visiting lama, not for the emperor.

The Panchen Tower

Although each tower appears to have two stories, only the Panchen Tower has an interior second floor, which like all upper floors at Yonghegong it is not open to the public. It is accessed by interior stairways at the sides of the building. After its initial use as a resting and teaching space by the Sixth Panchen Lama, the upper floor was used to store copies of the Buddhist canon.³⁸⁵ Since 1984, the lower floor has been open to the public and used for a modern version of “On Lamas:” didactic displays about the Panchen and Dalai Lamas and their relationship to the Qing and PRC governments.³⁸⁶ The displays about the Dalai Lama lineage

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 238. This was a common use for two storied structures at Buddhist temples, and a practical way to protect valuable and delicate texts. Meyer, “Chinese Buddhist,” 85.

³⁸⁶ Photographs were not allowed inside the tower during my last visit, and I am basing this section on the didactic displays on my memory and notes.

include material on the controversial figure of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, shown in photographs taken during his 1954 visit to Beijing, meeting with Chairman Mao and other dignitaries. What I found most interesting about the Dalai Lama displays was the lack of any mention of his problematic role in contemporary politics. No references were made to the Dalai Lama's exile in 1959 or later efforts toward Tibetan autonomy, even as a subject of criticism. As was discussed in Chapter Five in relation to the Panchen Lama displays in Courtyard III, didactic material at the site seems designed to 'accentuate the positive' by simply not addressing sensitive political issues, whereas in secular contexts a more strident tone is the norm. At Yonghegong, even the government-produced English-language historical pamphlet available to foreign visitors, titled the *Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*, presents the young Dalai Lama as an innocent pawn of "pro-imperialist separatists," and concludes its historical survey in 1951.³⁸⁷

Of course, such practices can be understood in the context of message control by the central government of the PRC, expressed through the Yonghegong administration, or more generously as the desire to avoid potentially controversial or negative topics at a religious site. However, an interesting comparison can be made with another kind of didactic display, the 1792 *Lamashuo* Pavilion, the Qianlong emperor's most overt effort at inserting a political topic into the mix at Yonghegong. Unlike the modern Panchen Lama display boards or the exhibition in the Panchen Tower, which are both comparatively unobtrusive at the site, the *Lamashuo* Pavilion is almost unavoidable, placed directly on the main axis. Furthermore, the tone of the essay is firm and uncompromising in its criticism of wayward lamas such as Grand Lama Rje-srung, and in asserting the court's right to control the tulku selection process with the "Golden Urn" system. This tone can be attributed both to the emperor's status as an absolute ruler as well as his claim to speak as an authority from within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Modern assertions of

³⁸⁷ Liao Zugui and Zhang Shuhua, *Peaceful Liberation of Tibet* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 1999) 21.

political/ideological authority at the site are less overt, perhaps due to the officially atheist orientation of the PRC government. However, there is an interesting exception in the case of the “Golden Urn” system. It has been adopted as the official method of selecting *tulkus* by the central government, and the possession of the two golden urns for *tulku* selection is used to legitimate assertions of authority over the selection process.³⁸⁸

The Ordination Platform Tower

Visitors who go into the Panchen Tower first may be surprised by the interior of the Ordination Platform Tower. It is a large and open space enclosed only by the exterior walls of the building and open from the ground up through the second story. Once again, the design principle of ‘conceal and reveal’ is used to create surprise followed by wonder, in this case wonder at the massive, three-level, marble ordination platform that seems immense in the enclosed space. A carved marble balustrade surrounds each level. The upper level is at about the height of what would be the floor level of the second story if the building had one. The platform is covered with relief carvings of clouds, a band of wave-like lotus vines just under the balustrades, and under the vines lotus petals similar to those that represent the lotus throne in Buddhist icons.

Modern adaptation of the space has turned it into a museum gallery: inset wall cases now display various works of Tibetan Buddhist art from the Yonghegong collection. Moreover, a lifelike wax model of the Qianlong emperor sits cross-legged on a purple sandalwood Luohan bed 羅漢床 in front of a carved wooden screen on the third level of the platform in a very

³⁸⁸ Siren, *Fourteenth Dalai Lama*, 13-23.

modern example of microcosmic symbolism.³⁸⁹ This effigy seems to be based on the image of the emperor as portrayed in the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portraits discussed earlier, two versions of which are in the Yonghegong collection. In fact, the fidelity to the image of the emperor in the portraits extends to the wax figure's red inner-robe and a type of ceremonial hat worn by a *tulku*.³⁹⁰ However, the wax image departs from the portraits in wearing an imperial yellow silk outer robe that covers its shoulders and clasped hands and cascades over the edges of the Luohan bed. This yellow may be an attempt to portray the emperor in a more imperial mode familiar to modern visitors. In any event, the entire costume departs from what the emperor would have worn for the tantric initiation ritual for which the platform was built. A five-lobed crown in the Yonghegong collection is identified as the one the emperor wore for the ceremony, and his other ritual vestments and ornaments probably resembled those worn by lamas on ritual occasions. Examples are found in both the Yonghegong and Palace Museum collections.³⁹¹

The three architectural units, the Hall of the Dharma Wheel and flanking towers, mirror the linked pavilions of the Tuṣita Heaven section that follows at the site. Before the construction of the towers in 1780, an earlier pair of buildings created a similar trio, as shown on the 1750 QJJCQT map. (Fig. 6) The map shows two surprisingly tiny buildings, only three bays wide with a one-bay portico extending out from the front. By the scale of the map, they appear even

³⁸⁹ Niu describes the bed and screen as having been used by the Qianlong emperor and succeeding Qing emperors for seated meditation, but does not discuss whether they were here originally and used in rites. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 239.

³⁹⁰ Tucci describes the use of such hats by tulkus exclusively. Giuseppe Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 135. In most versions of the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portraits the emperor is wearing a hat similar to the 'lotus hat,' but yellow with a red outline. This hat is associated exclusively with the Panchen Lama lineage by the Himalayan Art Resources website. "Gelugpa Hats," Himalayan Art, December 2007, <http://www.himalayanart.org/pages/hatsindex/hats_gelug/index.html>. The hat is seen on not only the Qianlong emperor but also Rölpe Dorjé in Qianlong-era paintings and sculpture (see for example Barbara Lipton and Nima Dorjee Ragnubs, *Treasures of Tibetan Art: Collections of the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 84-5. In only one version of the known *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portraits, one of the copies at Yonghegong, the emperor is wearing a 'pandita hat' or 'scholar's hat' (T. *pan zhwa*), a hat Rölpe Dorjé is also often represented in. For that portrait, see Du, *Palace of Harmony*, 222-23.

³⁹¹ See for example Wang Shu, *Lamasery*, 25.

smaller than the Octagonal Stele Pavilions in Courtyard III. To the rear of these buildings was a small space enclosed by a wall.

The addition of the larger towers completely created a somewhat awkward and constricted space that makes it difficult either to access the side towers or move around the main hall. Although the towers are located to either side of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel, the most convenient entrance to both is actually from the north side, Courtyard VII. The south entrance would normally be the formal entrance to a building oriented north-south, but the towers are very oddly placed so close to the north walls of the Eastern and Western Side Halls that barely a meter of space separates them. Furthermore, the towers are only separated from the Hall of the Dharma Wheel by a space two meters wide. The eaves of the two buildings actually overlap on each side, creating a shaded, tunnel-like passageway. (Fig. 58) The tight space makes ritual circumambulation of the hall difficult for any but a small group of people. But this was surely a minor concern compared to the need to make appropriately grand buildings for the important guest. Moreover, the spatial awkwardness was probably not an immediate problem given the relatively limited use the buildings enjoyed during the Panchen Lama's visit.³⁹²

Interpretation of the Plateau Section

Ascending to the plateau section from the palace section, the outer mandala expands from the palaces of the Qing court to the Qing Empire and even to the world as a whole. The raised area of the plateau section and the Tibetan style, function, and symbolism of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel make the building a proxy for the holy land of Tibet and the religious authority

³⁹² Niu seems to suggest that the Qianlong emperor insisted that the proportions of these towers be magnified due to the importance of the guest. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 273. I suspect that during the emperor's initiation ceremony, entering the building from the south may not have been ritually significant, or if so could have been accomplished by the emperor and a small entourage.

of the Gelugpa over the Qing Mongols. The five cupolas of the roof reference the Wuce Hall at Samye, but also further symbolize our world with Mt. Meru and its surrounding continents. The plateau section, then, is the wider world beyond the Chinese heartland, and the ruler of that world is the Wheel-turning King, the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*, the Qianlong emperor. The physical presence of that emperor is certainly recalled by the Ordination Platform Tower where he received his initiations. Along with its twin Panchen Tower, the two towers also evoke the presence of the Panchen Lama, who provided further mahāsiddha bona fides for the emperor. Finally, as the reign of the Wheel-turning king prefigures something greater, only as we enter the final major courtyard does our progress deeper into the site and into deeper levels of meaning, from palace to plateau, give way to something even grander: the coming of Maitreya, the future Buddha.

The Tuṣita Heaven Section

Description

Courtyard VII is the culmination of our journey through the outer mandala, as we enter finally into Tuṣita, the “Splendid Heaven of Joy” where Maitreya awaits rebirth. The courtyard is accessed either by passing through the Hall of the Dharma Wheel and exiting the rear doors, as an imperial visitor would have, or by going around the Hall of the Dharma Wheel and walking down one of the tight passageways on either side. Entering the courtyard either way, the visitor emerges into a wide but fairly shallow space that extends seventy meters east-west; at its narrowest point, it is roughly fifteen meters north-south on the axis, and thirty meters at its deepest. The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness rises majestically from the center of the courtyard. Given the tight space of the courtyard, it nearly blocks out the sky, and the building’s three-

storied, stepped-pyramid shape magnifies its appearance of height through a kind of forced perspective. (Fig. 60) Like the other buildings at Yonghegong, it is brightly painted and gilded, but it is distinguished by its *feilang* 飛廊 (“flying corridors,” also known as *feiqiao* 飛橋 “flying bridges”), two bridge-like, covered walkways that connect its surrounding second-story balcony to similar balconies on the two side buildings, the Pavilion of Prolonged Peace and the Pavilion of Eternal Health. Two simple, two-story, grey-tiled gabled-roof structures, the Yamāntaka Tower (*Yamandagalou* 雅曼達嘎) (formerly afforded access to the Temple to Guandi) and the Tower of the Buddha’s Reflection (*Zhaofolou* 照佛樓) face inward on the west and east sides of the courtyard, respectively.

The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (Wanfuge 萬福閣) (1750)

The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness group is a trio of buildings rich with complex historical and religious associations and inspiring a wealth of superlatives. It is the tallest building at Yonghegong, three stories and approximately 25 meters in height. It is the only building on site that is easily visible from outside the walls; its yellow roof tiles and brightly painted and gilded frame making it a clear landmark. (At night the pavilion is now brightly illuminated, making it even more reminiscent of the glittering descriptions of heavens and Pure Lands in Buddhist sutras.) The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness has the largest total interior floor space of any structure at the site (the upper floors are currently inaccessible to visitors), and much of it is given to the large interior well that holds the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* statue. The *feilang* connecting the pavilions are not only unique at Yonghegong, but also do not survive in any other extant example of traditional Chinese architecture, as far as I know. Finally, with the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness, the importance of Maitreya foreshadowed in the pailou

inscriptions in Courtyard I is climactically revealed. The pavilion was built to house what is arguably the most dramatic and historically significant work of art at Yonghegong, the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva*. Only when one enters the pavilion is the gilded, eighteen-meter-high icon revealed. I will begin with a description of the main pavilion and its two side pavilions followed by a discussion of historical and religious references that the trio of buildings suggests.

Exterior Architecture

The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness has a hip-and-gable upper roof and two lower skirt roofs, one covering the verandah at ground level, the other covering the surrounding balcony above.³⁹³ (Fig. 60) The roofs all have yellow tiles and standard eave decorations, including seven ‘walking beasts’ and an ‘immortal,’ but the bracket type is the relatively simple *danqiao* *danang*³⁹⁴ on the first story, indicating that the pavilion is of a lower rank than the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. It is difficult to determine the internal layout of the building from outside. What appears from the outside to be the third story is actually the upper part of the internal well of space that houses the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* statue. (Fig. 61) The building’s interior does in fact have three inner floors, but the second floor is hidden behind the lower skirt roof and not visible from the outside, and what appears to be the balconied second floor from the outside is actually the third floor in the interior. This hidden floor is typically referred to as a “mezzanine” level.

The building rests on a high stone plinth, thirty-three meters east-west by twenty-eight meters north-south. The ground floor is five bays (twenty-five meters) east-west and five bays (twenty-one meters) north-south. The front has latticed doorways in three bays flanked by single

³⁹³ Height from *History and Development of Ancient Chinese Architecture*, 139.

³⁹⁴單翹 單昂. It is the slightly more complex *danqiao zhongang* 單翹重昂 form on the third story.

bays with latticed windows; the ‘sill walls’ beneath the windows of undecorated stone. The eaves of the lower skirt roof extend over the plinth to create a verandah three meters wide on the north and south sides and four meters wide on the east and west sides. The verandah adds two truncated bays to either side of the façade, increasing the number of bays in the façade to seven, although the enclosed space of the ground floor is five bays. This is an interesting reversal of the plan of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel, with its five bay wide portico covering a seven bay wide interior structure.

Moving to the upper levels of the pavilion viewed from the front, the next story appears above the lower skirt roof. It is smaller than the ground floor but it follows the plan of the ground floor, with a smaller seven-bay balcony and five-bay enclosed floor.³⁹⁵ At the balcony level are the two *feilang*, the most notable feature of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness group. Immediately above the skirt roof covering the surrounding balcony is the very short upper roof level, three bays by three bays, and consisting only of a “column-top tie” level and a bracket level supporting the hip and gable roof. The roof level marks a rather abrupt visual transition from the five bay square balcony floor to the three-bay square upper roof section. I suspect that this awkward transition arose from adapting the strictures of Qing imperial building regulations to a structure built specifically to house a huge preexisting statue carved from a single, huge trunk of sandalwood, and not designed to accord with the regulated architectural proportions. In comparison, the transition and proportions are worked out much more effectively at the similar and slightly later Mahayana Pavilion (1755) at Puningsi in Chengde noted earlier. At forty meters high, it is a much taller building, and the twenty-three meter colossal statue inside was made of multiple pieces of wood, giving the designers more leeway in adjusting the statue’s height to the regulated proportions.

³⁹⁵ I was unable to acquire measurements for the upper floors of the pavilion.

The basic layout of the interior of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness is as follows. The main section of the ground floor, at the feet of the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* statue, is five bays wide and four deep, and roughly 345 meters square. It is entered from the south side through the three central bay doorways. Just inside these doors, the low ceiling (created by the underside of the second floor) blocks one's immediate view of the colossal statue. A full view is impossible until you are positioned at Maitreya's feet, where his immense size has the most dramatic impact. This is the final, and certainly most sudden, example of the 'conceal and reveal' effect utilized elsewhere at the site.

At the back of the pavilion is a separate chamber, five bays by one bay and roughly sixty-nine square meters, that can only be entered from the rear courtyard (Courtyard VIII). This chamber houses a colorful, sculptural tableau called the Cave of Avalokiteśvara (*Guanyindong* 觀音洞). Stairs on either side of this rear chamber give access to the two upper floors of the main hall. Although currently not open to the public, the upper floors are reported to contain ten-thousand pressed clay images of buddhas and bodhisattvas, a feature which was used to support an alternative interpretation of the name of the building, Pavilion of Myriad Buddhas (*Wanfoge* 萬佛閣), based on a common punning transposition of *fo* 佛 ("buddha") for *fu* 福 ("good fortune, happiness").³⁹⁶

The two pavilions that flank the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness are very similar in basic form to the Bell and Drum Towers in Courtyard III. They are also two-storied, hip-and-gable roofed structures with a second-floor balcony, but they are larger and more highly decorated, with "humpbacked rafters" roofs. The Pavilion of Prolonged Peace houses a large, wooden, mechanical tableau with a rotating column of Buddhas revealed by opening and closing lotus

³⁹⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 224. See also Chen, *Huashuo Yonghegong*, 21. For a photo of the pressed clay images, see Du, *Palace of Harmony*, 80.

petals. The Pavilion of Eternal Health has a similar rotating device akin to a pagoda with numerous internal niches for gilded statues. It is in the form of a rotating sutra cabinet (*zhuanlun jingzang* 轉輪經藏), a feature associated with Liao-period architecture, which as we will see also influenced the design of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness itself, along with the use of *feilang* to link the trio of pavilions.

Construction

The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness was constructed from Qianlong 13 (1748) to Qianlong 15 (October, 1750).³⁹⁷ According to Nan Jun, construction of the pavilion was inspired by the Qianlong emperor's concern that the Yonghegong site had poor *fengshui*, since the rear courtyard lacked something tall enough to act as a protective screen against malevolent *qi* from the north.³⁹⁸ This concern at Yonghegong was likely more pronounced than at other Buddhist temples because of the site's status as ancestral temple for the Yongzheng emperor. Auspicious *fengshui* is most important in relation to residences and tombs, and Yonghegong's status as both former residence and ancestral temple may have been one reason offered for undertaking such a lavish construction project.

The emperor ordered the Imperial Household Department Workshop (*Neiwufu Zaobanchu* 內務府造辦處) to tear down the structure formerly in the rear courtyard, the relatively small Bodhisattva Hall (*Pusadian* 菩薩殿), also called the Avalokiteśvara Pavilion (*Guanyingge* 觀音閣), to make space for the new pavilion.³⁹⁹ Niu quotes court records that list

³⁹⁷ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 272.

³⁹⁸ Nan Jun 南军, "Yonghegong de da fo 雍和宮的大佛 [The Great Buddha of Yonghegong]," *Zoujin Yonghegong* 走進雍和宮 [Entering Yonghegong], Administration Department of Yonghegong, ed. (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1999): 61.

³⁹⁹ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 272.

the cost of the building project as nearly 70,000 *liang* of silver, and the statues, furnishings and other objects (including the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva*) as 28,140 *liang* of silver and more than 540 *liang* of gold, an indicator of the importance of the project.⁴⁰⁰

Architectural Sources

The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness seems to reference earlier works of architecture in a manner better documented for later buildings, such as the Pavilion of Raining Flowers in the Forbidden City (inspired in part by the Golden Temple at Tholing in western Tibet) and the Mahayana Pavilion at Puning Monastery (inspired by Samye, as discussed above).⁴⁰¹ The Pavilion of Infinite Happiness shares many similarities with an earlier work that is a significant part of the canon of Chinese architectural history: the Avalokiteśvara Pavilion (*Guanyingge* 觀音閣) at Dule Monastery 獨樂寺 in Hebei province, dating to 984 (Fig. 104). This pavilion also enclosed a colossal standing statue and included a hidden mezzanine level. It was itself probably a response to the slightly earlier Great Compassion Pavilion (*Dabeige* 大悲閣 or *Foxiangge* 佛香閣) at Longxing Monastery 隆興寺 in Hebei province, dating to 971 and restored in the twentieth century.⁴⁰² The possibility that the Avalokiteśvara Pavilion was a model for the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness is suggested by a combination of political, religious, and even aesthetic circumstances.

The Avalokiteśvara Pavilion was constructed during the Liao dynasty, one of several earlier non-Chinese conquest dynasties that the Qing considered important predecessors. The

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 251.

⁴⁰¹ See Berger, *Empire*, 97-104 for an overview of the Pavilion of Raining Flowers, and Chayet, “Architectural Wonderland,” 38-9, for more on the Mahayana Pavilion.

⁴⁰² Both are detailed in Nancy S. Steinhardt, *Liao Architecture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), the Avalokiteśvara Pavilion on pp. 40-51, and the Great Compassion Pavilion on pp. 194-95.

multistoried pavilion was a common feature at Liao period Buddhist sites.⁴⁰³ Similarities between the two pavilions begin with size: the Avalokiteśvara Pavilion is twenty-three meters in height with a sixteen meter high statue, and the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness is twenty-five meters with an eighteen meter statue. Beyond simply enclosing a massive statue, the two structures have a further similarity. From the outside, the Avalokiteśvara Pavilion appears to be two stories, a hip and gable roof covering an upper verandah and a skirt roof below that. However, the interior actually has three stories, with the shorter, windowless middle story, or mezzanine, hidden behind the skirt roof. This is a feature found in the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness at Yonghegong as well as in a number of other important Qing pavilions, notably two in the Forbidden City: the Pavilion of Raining Flowers (*Yuhuage* 雨花閣, 1750), completed in the same year as the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness, and the later Pavilion of Cultural Origins (*Wenyuange* 文淵閣, 1776).

The Qianlong emperor was likely familiar with the Avalokiteśvara Pavilion at Dule Monastery because the temple was directly on the route to the Eastern Qing tombs (*Dongling* 東陵), where the emperor's grandfather and great-grandfather, the Kangxi and Shunzhi emperors, were interred, and where the tomb of the Qianlong emperor himself was later constructed. Stelae at Dule Monastery attest to the Qianlong emperor's connection with the site, although they date to 1753 (Qianlong 18), three years after the completion of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness, when the emperor had a travelling palace constructed at Dule Monastery and stelae erected with examples of his calligraphy.⁴⁰⁴ The emperor was perhaps further inspired by another pavilion enclosing a colossal statue: the twenty-two meter high bronze Avalokiteśvara statue at the Great

⁴⁰³ Guo Daiheng, "The Liao, Song, Xi Xia, and Jin Dynasties," in *Chinese Architecture*, ed. Nancy S. Steinhardt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 166.

⁴⁰⁴ For photos of the calligraphy, see the Dulesi website, <<http://www.dulesi.com/news/ShowInfo.aspx?ID=60>>, accessed 12/8/08.

Compassion Pavilion (*Dabeige* 大悲閣) at Longxing Monastery 隆興寺 in Hebei province. In 1755 the Qianlong emperor commissioned yet another colossal statue in a multistoried pavilion: the massive Mahayana Pavilion (*Dachengge* 大乘閣) at Puning Monastery 普寧寺, Chengde, noted earlier in relation to the roof of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. It houses a 22.28 meter high statue of Avalokiteśvara.

Feilang 飛廊

The most outstanding architectural feature of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness, the prominent use of *feilang*, is also associated with Liao and Jin dynasty style architecture.⁴⁰⁵ Feilang are unusual in Chinese architecture. Their rarity may be due to practical considerations such as difficulty of construction, safety and stability (particularly in earthquakes), and general lack of necessity given the predominance of single-storied structures. The prominent use at the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness of two *feilang* linking three buildings together in this symmetrical fashion is the only extant example of this configuration of which I am aware.

A specific architectural precedent for the unusual layout of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness and its side pavilions existed at Yuanmingyuan. One of the more fanciful of the numerous sub-complexes at the site was named “Fanghu Wonderland” (*Fanghu shengjing* 方壺勝景) (Fig. 105), an architectural tour-de-force completed in 1740 that included two trios of pavilions linked by *feilang*. Similarities with the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness include the general layout of the three linked structures and the size of the central structures (seven bays wide, two stories, with an upper verandah and double-eaved hip and gable roof). An even more

⁴⁰⁵ Chen, *Hua shuo Yonhhegong*, 21.

telling connection is that one of the buildings is actually named the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (*Wanfuge*), although in this case it is the western subsidiary pavilion of the north trio.

The term Fanghu refers to one of the mythical Eastern Isles inhabited by Daoist immortals, and the Qianlong emperor expressed his intention to create a Daoist paradise on earth with this particular site in his collection of poems on the sights of Yuanmingyuan.⁴⁰⁶ Complex and fanciful architecture has long been associated with imagery of Daoist and Buddhist paradises, representing the palaces of immortals or the palatial residences of the Buddhist faithful reborn in heavens and Pure Lands. Therefore, an architectural wonder like the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness would bring up general associations of Daoist and Buddhist celestial palaces. However, given the specific layout of this trio of buildings, the inscriptions on the central pavilion, and most importantly the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* statue housed within, a more specific association was intended, that of the Tuṣita Heaven.

In standard imagery of the Land of Bliss (Sukhavati), the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitabha, is represented as a vast courtyard. Amitabha sits at the center, under a stylized and bejeweled tree, flanked by large bodhisattvas and other divine beings. Surrounding the courtyard are elaborate palace buildings, pavilions and covered walkways modeled on Chinese timber-frame structures. At the top of the image, read as the rear of the courtyard, a recurring architectural configuration appears just above/ behind the central, iconic Amitabha: a large building, often a multistoried tower, with arched bridges or covered walkways stretching out to pavilions on either side. This particular composition was standard by at least the Tang dynasty based on murals at Dunhuang, and was still current in the Qianlong period, as seen in an embroidered image of the Land of Bliss based on a painting by Ding Guanpeng 丁觀鵬 (fl.

⁴⁰⁶ Wong, *Paradise*, 47.

1737-68), a court painter known for Buddhist subjects. (Fig. 106) The layout of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness and its associated pavilions is strikingly reminiscent of this standard Pure Land architectural configuration. A similar configuration survives from the Liao period in the sutra cabinets in the Bhagavat Sutra Library at Huayan Monastery in Datong, Shanxi Province.⁴⁰⁷ The upper registers of the cabinets are designed to resemble the palatial architecture found in imagery of heavens and Pure Lands, which Steinhardt notes are known as “Heavenly Palace Tower Pavilions” (C. *tiangong louge* 天宮樓閣). At the center of the cabinets on the north wall, arching over the doorway, is a familiar architectural feature: a central pavilion linked to the other “palaces” by two *feilang*.

The Name and Signboards

The Chinese name of the pavilion, *Wanfu* 萬福閣, is translated with some latitude, allowing “myriad blessings” or even “myriad buddhas” as noted previously, and the Manchu name of the pavilion similarly suggests “myriad good fortune.” However, I prefer to translate the Chinese name as “Infinite Happiness” because it reflects the intention that the building be understood as the Tuṣita Heaven, an interpretation supported by the name of Yonghegong as a whole in Tibetan, *Ganden chinchöling*, literally “Splendid Heaven of Bliss,” a translation of the Sanskrit meaning of Tuṣita.⁴⁰⁸

Hanging above the central doorway is the pavilion’s name board, with its carved, painted and gilded frame identical in style to those at the other axial buildings. Like those it provides the name of the building in Manchu, Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian.

⁴⁰⁷ Steinhardt, *Liao Architecture*, 130-32.

⁴⁰⁸ The characters “*wan fu* 萬福” are translated into English as ‘infinite happiness’ in the main tourist guide to Yonghegong, edited by the chief abbot and administrators of the site. Wang, *Lamasery of Harmony and Peace* (2002) map, n.p.

Ma.: *Tumen hūhuri asari* “Tower of Myriad Good Fortune”

C: *Wanfuge* 萬福閣 “Pavilion of Infinite Happiness”

Imperial Seal: *Qianlong yu bi zhi bao* 乾隆御筆之寶 “Treasure of Qianlong Imperial Calligraphy”

Unlike the other buildings at Yonghegong, the façade of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness displays four other inscribed signboards (*bian'e* 匾額) that help to express the symbolism and significance of the building. Niu provides modern Chinese glosses of the meanings of the inscriptions, and my translations follow them. The first two are column couplet plaques (*yinglian* 楹联) on the columns to either side of the central doorway. Like the name boards, the frames are intricately carved dragons in clouds, but here are simply gilded and lack the green and blue colors of the clouds in the name board. The long, nine-character inscription on each plaque is in the calligraphic style of the Qianlong emperor, in raised gilded characters on a blue background. The couplets read:

(Right) 慧日麗璇霄光明萬象 *Hui ri li xuan xiao guang ming wan xiang*

“The wisdom of the Buddha shines on all, glowing with jade brilliance even in the darkest night, illuminating all phenomena;”

(Left) 法雲垂玉宇安隱諸方 *Fa yun chui yu yu an yin zhu fang*

“The Bodhisattva expounds the Dharma in the heavenly jade palace, manifesting peace and stability in all directions.”⁴⁰⁹

The next signboard hangs in the eaves above the central bay of the second floor verandah.

It reads:

淨城慧因 *Jing cheng hui yin*

“The Pure Palace is the Source of [the Buddha’s] Wisdom.”⁴¹⁰

The final signboard hangs under the roof, in the eaves above the central bay. It reads:

圓觀並應 *Yuan guan bing ying*

“Perfection and Contemplation Co-arising.”⁴¹¹

Apart from these plaques, the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness has a number of other textual additions, these more recent. Most prominent are two stone stelae placed in front of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness to either side of the front stairway. Capped with sculpted dragons, the stelae are reminiscent of the imperial stelae seen earlier in the site and are similar in size, but differ in that the text is cut into black stone and gilded. The stelae were erected in 1993, a year

⁴⁰⁹ Taking 穩 for 隱 in Niu. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 468-69.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 467. Niu takes *jincheng* 淨城 as “Pure Land,” but since the Tuṣita Heaven is not technically a Pure Land, I have opted for “pure palace,” making a more explicit connection between the pavilion at Yonghegong and the palace of Maitreya in Tuṣita.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 467-68.

in which Yonghegong celebrated its 250th anniversary, but they commemorated the 1988 refurbishing of the pavilion that included repainting the exterior and re-gilding the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* statue inside. At the top of each stela, surrounded by the carved dragons, is a large, four-character phrase meaning “(May their names) be remembered down through the ages” (*Wan gu liu fang* 萬古流芳). The stele on the right (north) side includes a long text, titled “Yonghegong Pavilion of Infinite Happiness Reconstruction Merit Stele” (*Yonghegong chongxiu Wanfuge gongde bei* 雍和宮重修萬福閣功德碑), and dated April 15, 1988.⁴¹² The stele on the left (south) lists the names of the donors, continuing the list begun on the sides and rear of the north stele.

Although the stele is a modern addition to Yonghegong, the text on the north stele is worthy of note for its synthesis of political and religious themes, a combination fundamental to the site since its founding as a monastery. It begins with the gift of the immense trunk of sandalwood from the Seventh Dalai Lama that was carved into the statue and then encased in the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness. The text goes on to recall other famous colossal Maitreya statues in the PRC, the *Seated Maitreya Buddha* at Leshan (803 CE) and the bronze *Seated Maitreya* at Tashilhunpo Monastery in Tibet (1914), and also points to the pan-Asian regard for the deity. Then the text situates the statue in the context of the Qianlong emperor’s installing of the Seventh Dalai Lama as administrator of Tibet as part of the Qing empire, “...marking the beginning of Tibet’s two hundred years’ unity of religion and politics to rule [the people].”⁴¹³ Thus the statue becomes a “self-evident” (*zibudaiyan* 自不待言) “...symbol of the harmonious unification of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist denominations, as well as clear proof for the

⁴¹² The full text of the stele essay is provided in *Ibid.*, 281.

⁴¹³ 開藏區二百年政教合一之規是. *Ibid.*, 281.

political unification of these two areas.”⁴¹⁴ These statements suggest that the modern PRC government and its authority in Tibet may be understood as an unbroken continuation of Qing authority, and the text continues to suggest further continuity from the Qing government to the PRC government in relation to efforts to restore, maintain and protect the site. Finally, using overtly Buddhist language that would have been unusual in a public context before the 1990s, the text concludes with a poetic paean to the reconstruction, noting the blessings that Maitreya Bodhisattva provides to China, ensuring harmony and peace (the *yong* and *he* in Yonghegong) as well as prosperity.⁴¹⁵

A final modern textual addition appears on the two outermost columns of the three central entrance bays of the verandah. Two metal plaques are affixed to the columns, the southern one in English and the northern one in Chinese. They are official plaques provided by the Guinness Book of Records, dated to August 1990. They display signatures of Guinness Book representatives on the English plaque, and certify that the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* “...was carved out of a single white sandalwood tree 26 metres high.” The plaques endow Yonghegong with the imprimatur of international authority that only the renowned Guinness Book can provide.

Conclusion

Although the unusual layout of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness was not unprecedented in Qing architecture, its appearance at Yonghegong allows clear connections to be made with the three spheres. At the macrocosmic level, the pavilion is the climactic structure at the site, representing the end point of an ever-expanding progression through symbolic space and time.

⁴¹⁴ 漢藏兩族佛教團結和合之象徵，且是為兩地政治統一之明證。Ibid., 281.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

Its signboards are redolent with references to a bodhisattva in a celestial palace in a heavenly realm. That bodhisattva is revealed inside the building as Maitreya, the future buddha, and the heavenly realm is Tuṣita, in which beings exist as godlike *devas*, with immensely tall, radiant bodies, characteristics displayed by the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* statue within the pavilion. On a mesocosmic level, the architectural features of the pavilion point to Liao Dynasty models, and the Liao as non- Chinese rulers of China were part of the Qing courts legitimating discourse. Finally, on a microcosmic level, the Qianlong emperor's own calligraphy, first seen in the pailou in Courtyard I, makes its final appearance at the site. With the outer mandala complete, we move onward and inward to an overview of the inner mandala in the final chapters.

Chapter Seven: The Inner Mandala, Part 1

Introduction

Having passed through the outer mandala at Yonghegong, moving through symbolic time and space from the Jetavana Garden of the ancient Buddhist past, to the palace and plateau of what was the imperial eighteenth-century present and on to the Tuṣita Heaven of the Buddha of the future, we have seen how the three spheres of macrocosm, mesocosm and microcosm are reflected in the buildings, structures, stelae and inscription plaques at the site. In this chapter and the next we move from exterior to interior, and introduce the inner mandala, the immense sculptural pantheon and iconographic panoply found in the halls of Yonghegong. In covering the inner mandala I will focus on the sculptures of the axial halls of the site, emphasizing those aspects that relate most clearly to the three spheres. To help make those connections, this chapter presents three topics that exemplify some of the ways the ideology of imperial universalism influenced the creation of Tibetan Buddhist art for the Qianlong court in general before detailing specific Yonghegong works in the final chapter.

The first of these topics is the importance the *Canon of Iconometry*, a text compiled for the court in 1742, two years before the formal opening of Yonghegong as a monastic college. It sets out the proper proportional measurements for Buddhist images, and presents this iconometry in decidedly polemical terms with clear political implications. The text emphasizes the superiority of images made in the “Indian style” to those made in the “Chinese (Han) style,” which it asserts had deviated over the centuries from the proper models, and it holds up the style of the Nepali artist and architect Anige who worked at the court of Khubilai Khan as an example to be emulated. The second topic demonstrates how this emulation of Anige was carried out at the Qianlong court through the summoning of six Nepali artists to the Qing capital to produce

Buddhist sculpture and decorative art for the Yonghegong reconstruction and other projects. Relying on the research of Luo Wenhua, I will first provide an overview of Tibetan Buddhist artistic production for the court, followed by a more detailed look at the brief tenure of the Nepalis at the capital, highlighting its political and historic significance as well as their artistic legacy. The third and final topic is the development of the various ‘official’ Qing Tibetan Buddhist pantheons. These pantheons were produced in a number of media: sculpture, paintings and, perhaps most important for the study of Tibetan Buddhist art, a printed version that has circulated widely, and I will relate them to the seemingly comprehensive sculptural pantheon at Yonghegong. Although all three of these topics have been addressed by Berger and Luo, I am revisiting them in order to emphasize how even such meta-issues in the production of Tibetan Buddhist art have a political dimension and can be linked to the ideology of imperial universalism.

Part 1: *The Canon of Iconometry* (C. *Zaoxiang liangdu jing* 造像量度經), 1742)⁴¹⁶

The Text and its Translator/Compiler

Two years before the 1744 formal opening of Yonghegong as a monastic college, the Qing court translator Gömpojab (T. *mGon-po-skyabs*; C. *Gongbu Chabu* 工布查布, 1699-1750) compiled a set of translations from Tibetan to Chinese titled the *Canon of Iconometry*.⁴¹⁷ This text, which set out a system of standard measurements and proportions for the making of Tibetan

⁴¹⁶ T. v. 21, no. 1419, pp. 936a-956b. Cai Jingfeng has provided a complete English translation based on a copy of the 1874 reprinting of the 1748 original printed version. mGon-po-skyabs (Gömpojab), *The Buddhist Canon of Iconometry: with Supplement*, trans. Cai Jingfeng 蔡景峰 (Ulm: Fabri Verlag, 2000), henceforth mGon-po-skyabs. I did not have access to the copy of the 1748 version used by Cai, and to compare to Cai’s translation to the original I used the online *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, SAT Daizōkyō Text Database, <http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index_en.html>, accessed November, 2009. All Chinese text used here follows that version.

⁴¹⁷ Dates for Gömpojab follow Henss, quoting Petech without specific source. mGon-po-skyabs, 8.

Buddhist paintings and sculptures, combined a translation of a Tibetan text from the Tibetan Buddhist canon with extensive commentaries and supplementary texts written by the translator. Although it is difficult directly to connect this text with the statues produced for the halls of Yonghegong, there is strong circumstantial evidence that the work reflected iconometric standards in place at the time of the rebuilding of Yonghegong. This is borne out both by historical evidence in the text, and in comparing its iconometric standards to some of the Yonghegong sculpted works, to be done in the next chapter.

Recent studies have noted the importance of the *Canon of Iconometry*. Berger discusses the text in *Empire of Emptiness*, primarily in relation to a central theme in her study: the philosophical issues of form and emptiness that were addressed in the eighteenth-century prefaces and introduction written for the text by Qing court luminaries.⁴¹⁸ In a lengthy introduction to Cai Jingfeng's translation of the text, Michael Henss provides background on Gömpojab, an overview of the canonical sources that informed the work, the prefaces, and the Tibetan Buddhist environment of the Qing court. He suggests that, due to the quantity of Tibetan Buddhist works produced during the Qianlong period (the largest number ever made by an imperial court), the imperial workshops must have used the *Canon of Iconometry* as a “fundamental ‘theory of art.’”⁴¹⁹ I would add to this the assertion that, although the linguistic milieu of Tibetan Buddhism at the Qing court was primarily Tibetan and Mongolian, and the sources for this text were Tibetan, curiously a Tibetan language version of this particular text is unknown. It may be this specially compiled Chinese work that can best reflect for us the iconometric system used for Tibetan-Buddhist art of the Qing court in the eighteenth century.

⁴¹⁸ Berger, *Empire*, 84-88.

⁴¹⁹ mGon-po-skyabs, 29.

Gömpojab was a prolific and multilingual translator who was most active from the Kangxi through early Qianlong periods. He was best known as a translator from Tibetan into Mongolian. His work immediately preceding the translation of *The Canon of Iconometry* included a Tibetan-Mongolian dictionary in 1737.⁴²⁰ He was also involved in the early Qianlong era project to translate part of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon into Mongolian. The Tibetan Buddhist Canon is comprised of the *Kanjur* (T. *bka'-'gyur*), or “Translated Words” of sutras and tantras attributed to the Buddha, and *Tanjur* (T. *bsTan 'gyur*), or “Translated Treatises” of commentaries by Indian Buddhist masters. A translation of the *Kanjur* from Tibetan to Mongolian, originally made in the 1620s under the last Great Khan, Lighdan Khaghan of the Chakhar Mongols, was printed in the Kangxi period from 1718-20.⁴²¹ In the Qianlong period, the canon was finally completed with the translation of the *Tanjur*, a project that lasted from 1741 to 1749 and for which Gömpojab was best known in later years.⁴²² The *Tanjur* is also the source for the main text that informed *The Canon of Iconometry*.⁴²³

Gömpojab was a person of some status in the Qing court. He was from an aristocratic family⁴²⁴ of the Mongol Udzumutsin tribe⁴²⁵ in what is today Inner Mongolia, and was an imperial son-in-law (“Ceremonial Companion,” C. *yibin* 儀賓).⁴²⁶ At the time of his translation

⁴²⁰ mGon-po-skyabs, 9. It is described as a “dictionary for beginners” by Dharmatāla. Dharmatāla, *Rosary of White Lotus: Being the Clear Account of How the Precious Teaching of Buddha Appeared and Spread in the Great Hor Country*, trans. Piotr Klafkowski (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987) 401.

⁴²¹ Wang Xiangyun, 143. Dates for the *Tanjur* project follow Wang Xiangyun, 141-42, n. 1 and 2, quoting Walther Heissig.

⁴²² Dharmatāla notes Gömpojab’s fame among nineteenth century Mongols for his work on the *Tanjur* translation. Dharmatāla, *Rosary of White Lotus*, 393. Noted in Berger, *Empire*, 84.

⁴²³ mGon-po-skyabs, 133. In his introduction to the English translation of the *Canon of Iconometry*, Henss lists other translations by Gömpojab, as well as presenting an overview of iconometric texts in the Tibetan Buddhist Canon. mGon-po-skyabs, 10-20.

⁴²⁴ In his supplementary section, Gömpojab identifies himself as of the *qiowen* 奇渥溫 lineage, descendants of Genghis Khan. mGon-po-skyabs, 85, n. 86.

⁴²⁵ Udzumutsin tribe: 烏朱穆秦部.

⁴²⁶ mGon-po-skyabs, 133. Translations follow Cai. Cai, translating Ben Cheng’s preface, notes that he was a son-in-law of the imperial family, and elsewhere uses the term “Ceremonial Companion” but doesn’t make it clear that “Ceremonial Companion” was the court term for imperial son-in-law. mGon-po-skyabs, 45. See Li Hongwei 李宏

of the *Canon of Iconometry* his full title was “General Director of Tibetan Studies, Cabinet of the Great Qing Empire, Responsible for Translation of the Tibetan and Mongolian Languages.”⁴²⁷

However, perhaps since he himself was not a monk or lama, he is careful to point out that the inspiration for his translation came from the Grand State Tutor, Lama Chongfan Jingjue of the Chanding Lamasery,⁴²⁸ and he also notes his benefactor and tutor Hongzhao Sanzang Guangzhi Fawang,⁴²⁹ who he says discussed with him the dimensions and measurements of esoteric mandala, stupa and imagery, among other topics.

The Canon of Iconometry as compiled by Gömpojab is divided into sections. It begins with five prefaces: the first was added to the work at the time that the work was printed in 1748, and the next four prefaces added earlier in 1742, at the time the work was first translated into Chinese. These prefaces are followed by Gömpojab’s own introduction to the text, which provides a pious history of Buddhist iconography and iconometry, and comments on Buddhist image-making in China. The next section is the translation of the Tibetan original *Canon of Iconometry* from the *Tanjur* that the text describes as a teaching given to the arhat Śāriputra by Śākyamuni Buddha.⁴³⁰ It is a terse text, taking up only three pages in the original Chinese and in the English translation.⁴³¹ This is followed by the text of the *Canon of Iconometry* repeated, the lines interspersed with Gömpojab’s commentary on the original. Finally, the translator provides

为, *A Chinese-English Dictionary of the Historical Archives in the Ming and Qing* 汉英明清历史档案词典 (Beijing: Tie dao chubanshe, 1999). Li translates *zongguan* 總管 as “Supervisor-in-chief.”

⁴²⁷ 大清内閣掌譯番蒙諸文西番學總管. Translation follows mGon-po-skyabs, 65.

⁴²⁸ 禪定寺崇梵靜覺國師喇嘛. mGon-po-skyabs, 52.

⁴²⁹ 弘教三藏廣智法王. mGon-po-skyabs, 49.

⁴³⁰ Henss provides a history of the various Sanskrit texts on iconometry that were translated and added to the Tibetan canon. mGon-po-skyabs, 11-21. He seems to suggest on p. 11 that the *Canon of Iconometry* text is based on a lost Sanskrit original, the fourth century *Pratishmana lakṣaṇa* (also *Pratimā lakṣaṇa sūtra*), but later, on pp. 18-19, quotes Giuseppe Tucci’s contention that the text is based on later Tibetan iconographic texts. mGon-po-skyabs, 11.

⁴³¹ Cai’s copy of the 1874 reprinting of the 1748 original printing seems to have had the original text from the *Tanjur* as a separate text, followed by the text repeated with commentary by Gömpojab. It is that *Tanjur* text which only takes up three pages in the Chinese original and in Cai’s English translation. In the online *Taishō* the original *Tanjur* text only appears once with Gömpojab’s commentary interspersed among the sections of the original text.

an extensive supplement that actually makes up the largest section of the text. This supplement includes further detailed iconometric systems for bodhisattvas and other deities central to Tibetan Buddhism.⁴³² It also includes warnings against using improper iconometry (with deleterious results that range from exile, curved spines, and crippled offspring, to poor harvests and sericulture);⁴³³ descriptions of the merits from the proper use of iconometry (including rebirth as a “Wheel-turning King,” among other benefits);⁴³⁴ and finally descriptions of the proper rituals for installation, movement and storage of images and icons.

The Politics of Iconometry

As products of the Qing court intellectual milieu Gömpojab’s introduction and the other prefaces have certain similarities of form and style. All provide the year they were written and an auspicious day in the Buddhist ritual calendar; for example the introduction is dated to 1742 (Qianlong 7) on the day commemorating Śākyamuni Buddha’s descent from the Trāyastriṃśa Heaven after preaching the dharma to the *devas*.⁴³⁵ Also similar to the prefaces, the introduction is written in a formal, academic manner described by Cai as “the pedantic style favored by high ranking officials and cultural celebrities,”⁴³⁶ a style that has its roots in late Ming-Qing “evidential scholarship” (*kaozheng xue* 考證學).⁴³⁷ It includes rich use of literary allusion to the Chinese classics and Buddhist and Daoist texts, as well as what Cai calls “archaic and obscure forms” and idiosyncratic metaphors.⁴³⁸ It is a style most visible at Yonghegong in the prominent

⁴³² Henss provides details on the iconometric and iconographic sources for Gömpojab’s supplement. mGon-po-skyabs, 18-21.

⁴³³ mGon-po-skyabs, 106.

⁴³⁴ mGon-po-skyabs, 121.

⁴³⁵ This auspicious event is commemorated by the Tibetan holiday known as Lhabap Düchen (T. *Lha-bab Dus-chen*) celebrated on the twenty-second day of the ninth month of the Tibetan Calendar.

⁴³⁶ mGon-po-skyabs, 132.

⁴³⁷ For an overview of ‘evidential scholarship,’ see Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 39-49.

⁴³⁸ mGon-po-skyabs, 132.

stelae texts written by the Qianlong emperor. In all cases, the style proclaims the writer's mastery of the Chinese scholarly tradition, thereby lending credence to the author's arguments among the Chinese literati.

A further characteristic of this style of writing is a tendency to situate the topic under consideration with philological and historicizing explication, and Gömpojab's introduction begins accordingly with a pious history of image-making and iconography. Beginning with an ancient, pre-Buddhist Sanskrit text that gives the traditional origins of iconography, he then gives an overview of the earliest references to image-making in the Buddhist tradition. These earliest references date to the time of Śākyamuni Buddha, and describe the origins of Buddhist iconography in portraits of the Buddha. The first reference is to King Bimbisāra (*Pingsawang* 瓶沙王), who "obtained a painting (of the Buddha) from the latter himself,"⁴³⁹ and the second is the more widely known tale of King Udayana (*Youtianwang* 優填王), who commissioned a sandalwood portrait sculpture of the Buddha, a version of which is enshrined in the Tower of the Buddha's Reflection at Yonghegong.⁴⁴⁰ Gömpojab's further links these image-making origin tales with Śāriputra's contemporaneous recording of iconographic standards in the *Canon of Iconometry* (also from the Buddha himself), creating an impeccable pedigree for the three arts of iconometry, sculpture and painting. Furthermore, by noting the earliest examples of both painting and sculpture, rather than simply the earliest example of image-making, Gömpojab may be suggesting equivalence between these two media.

⁴³⁹The text says "乞得世尊畫容." The tale of King Bimbisāra commissioning a portrait of the Buddha to send to King Udayana or King Udayana is told in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition as the origin of thangka painting, and is most often cited as the origin of the well-known *Wheel of Life and Death* (S. *Bhavacakra*) iconography, although the leap from portrait to the complex, didactic iconography of the *Wheel* remains unclear to me. A possible source for the tale is the *Vinayavibbhaṅga* in the Tibetan canon. See Alex Wayman, *Untying the Knots in Buddhism, Selected Essays* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1997) 40.

⁴⁴⁰ For an overview of the tradition of the sandalwood image, see Amy McNair, "Sandalwood Auspicious Image," in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1994) 221-225.

In his introduction, Henss discusses the relationship between painting and sculpture in the context of Qing court Tibetan Buddhist art, framing the topic as a question of whether the text of the *Canon of Iconometry* is intended for sculpture or painting. He notes some ambiguity in the Chinese original, probably referring to the term *xiang* 像 which is for example variably translated by Cai as “statue” (p. 44), “painting” (p. 48), “iconograph,” (p. 48), “image” (p. 49) or “icon” (p. 85).⁴⁴¹ However, although he points to examples in the prefaces in which it is clear that either sculpture or painting is being referred to, in most of the prefaces and Gömpojab’s own text sculpture is referred to specifically. Henss seems to suggest that, although the regulations in the text apply to both, and *thangka* production at the court was considerable in the later eighteenth century, as a practical matter they were applied more to statues under the lavish patronage of the Qianlong emperor when statues “were much more in demand” for temples and shrines.⁴⁴²

A more interesting dimension of the question of painting vs. sculpture is brought up by Henss earlier in the introduction. In laying out an image of a Tibetan Buddhist deity, a standard unit of proportional measurement is used, known in Tibetan as a *sor* (S. *āṅgula*, “finger-breadth”). Each deity has a certain set number of *sor* for each part of the body, for example 12 ½ *sor* for a buddha’s face. This allows the proportions to remain the same whether the final work is a large statue or a small manuscript illustration.⁴⁴³ However, as Henss notes, there are differing iconometric standards in the works on iconometry in the Tibetan Buddhist canon. The *Kālacakra Tantra* and the *Mahāsamvarodaya Tantra* in the *Kanjur* use a measurement standard of

⁴⁴¹ Henss notes the ambiguity. mGon-po-skyabs, 30. Examples are mine.

⁴⁴² mGon-po-skyabs, 29.

⁴⁴³ Of course for very large statues, like the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* at Yonghegong, certain proportional adjustments must be made to correct for optical distortion in viewers looking up from below. For an interesting study of this phenomenon in European sculpture see Steven F. Ostrow, “The Discourse of Failure in Seventeenth-Century Rome: Prospero Bresciano’s ‘Moses’,” *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (Jun., 2006): 267-291.

125 *sor* for images of the Buddha, while the *Pratishmana lakshana* in the *Tanjur* uses a standard of 120 *sor*.⁴⁴⁴ In a footnote, Henss mentions one attempt to reconcile this inconsistency by Sanggye Gyatso (T. *Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho*, 1653-1705, the third regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama), who suggested that one standard is for sculptors (125 *sor*) and the other for painters (120 *sor*).⁴⁴⁵

What Henss does not make explicit in his introduction is that the *Canon of Iconometry*, while compiling iconometric and iconographic standards from various canonical sources, prescribes the 120-*sor* measurement as the official standard. This is significant, because, in fact, the question of which standard to use was a current and somewhat controversial issue in the eighteenth century.⁴⁴⁶ The system propagated by Sanggye Gyatso was a continuation of the Fifth Dalai Lama's government program to shore up legitimacy by propagating standards throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world.⁴⁴⁷ Gömpojab's use of the 120-*sor* standard may have been based on the system propagated by Sanggye Gyatso, which was widespread in the first half of the eighteenth century, but simplified it by removing the distinction between painting and sculpture.⁴⁴⁸ At the end of his introduction, Gömpojab states that in writing his introduction he is "...following the example of [Sanggye Gyatso] in giving an introduction to his surveys of the Five Branches of Science...", a statement that indicates he was at least familiar with his work.⁴⁴⁹ However, unlike Sanggye Gyatso's writings on iconometry, Gömpojab does not discuss the discrepancies in the various Tibetan canonical texts even to refute them, discrepancies he must

⁴⁴⁴ The total of *sor* adds the vertical and horizontal measurements together. For example in a 120-*sor* image, there are 70 *sor* vertically and 50 *sor* horizontally.

⁴⁴⁵ mGon-po-skyabs, 26, n. 45. Which standard applies to which medium is from David P. Jackson, and Janice A. Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods & Materials* (Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1988) 144.

⁴⁴⁶ For the details of this controversy, see Ibid., 144-148; and K. Peterson, "Sources of Variation in Tibetan Canons of Iconometry," in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, ed. M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, Dec. 1980.): 239-48.

⁴⁴⁷ Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 144.

⁴⁴⁸ Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting*, 144.

⁴⁴⁹ mGon-po-skyabs, 53.

have been aware of since his supplement section is a compilation based on them. He simply does not address the debate, presenting the 120-sor system as an unambiguous standard for all images, sculpted or painted. Gömpojab's goal seems to have been to present a normative system for the production and use of Buddhist images, far more than simply providing a translation of a canonical work on iconometry.

The Text as Normative Model

The Canon of Iconometry is a prescriptive guidebook on how Tibetan Buddhist images should look and how they should be properly treated. However, as a work based on Tibetan Buddhist canonical sources, and given that the linguistic milieu of Tibetan Buddhism was Tibetan and Mongolian, for whom was this Chinese text intended? Clearly it was not for the often illiterate Chinese artisans and craftsmen who might have made such images. Although they might have made use of the iconometric diagrams provided in the *Canon of Iconometry*, the text does not go into any technical specifics of image making that would be the purview of craftsmen (such as molding, alloy proportions, making pigments, etc.), or describe in detail the ritual procedures governing the use of images in regular rites throughout the year. In fact, those who might have need of a text like the *Canon of Iconometry* were not the artisans but the patrons of Buddhist art, namely Chinese-literate subjects of the Qing empire who “resolve to fashion an image,”⁴⁵⁰ including lay Buddhists, high ranking clerics, and Chinese monks who patronized and supervised the production of Buddhist images. But why would Chinese monks and laity patronize works based on Tibetan Buddhist standards, when the practice of Tibetan Buddhism was not widespread among the Chinese constituency of the empire?

⁴⁵⁰ 若有善信人等。發心造像。Cai translates it very broadly: “those devotees, men and women, who have decided to sculpt or paint a statue or image of Buddha.” mGon-po-skyabs, 46.

The prefaces answer that question with unequivocal finality: Chinese Buddhist iconometry is simply wrong. They argue that the *Canon of Iconometry* was intended to rectify the imprecise dimensions that had crept into Chinese Buddhist sculpture since the Han dynasty, in effect dismissing the entire history of Chinese Buddhist image-making as heterodox. This determination is perhaps given particular weight by the fact that a number of the preface writers appear to be Chinese Buddhist monks based on their names. Preface Five, by the monk Cishan 慈善,⁴⁵¹ states that “Since the Han-Tang dynasties, the Emperor, his ministers, the grandees and Buddhist monks have made countless Buddhist statues for worship. Unfortunately, though the artists were numerous, very few have behaved according to formal regulation, with their statues made in incorrect dimensions.” Although the *Canon of Iconometry* had been conveyed by the Buddha himself to the arhat Śāriputra, “... this Canon has not circulated in China.”⁴⁵² Preface Four, by the novice monk Mingding 明鼎,⁴⁵³ is somewhat more forgiving, noting that the sculptors and patrons had good intentions, but “...the statue may have some errors due to the difference in technique of the artists which may lead to negligence in respect.”⁴⁵⁴ Preface Three, by the monk Dingguang Jiezhū 定光界珠, presents philosophical questions on the status of image and appearance in Buddhist thought, but does not raise the issue of insufficiencies in Chinese Buddhist imagery.

Preface Two is by Rölpe Dorjé, and his preface is the best textual evidence that this work was among those current in his mind during his work as the religious overseer of the

⁴⁵¹ The name in the text is 慈善比丘本誠. Cai translates this as “Bencheng, a benevolent Buddhist monk,” taking monk (S. *bhikṣu*; C. *bīqiū* 比丘; “fully ordained monk”) as a description. Berger takes *Cishan* 慈善 as the monks name, rather than a description, and *bīqiū* as his title, following the standard form *family name, title, given name*. Berger, *Empire*, 84.

⁴⁵² mGon-po-skyabs, 45.

⁴⁵³ Novice monk: S. *śrāmaṇera*, C. *shamen* 沙門.

⁴⁵⁴ mGon-po-skyabs, 44.

Yonghegong rebuilding project. He cites “imperfect ritual regulation” as the source for the insufficiencies in Chinese Buddhist sculpture since the Han dynasty, and notes that “...the art of imitation [in Chinese Buddhist art] is still not sufficiently advanced to reveal its reality.”⁴⁵⁵ This is a problem that Gömpojab’s translation would help to right and “...save lay people from misery.”⁴⁵⁶ Preface One, the last one added to the text, is by Prince Zhuang (C. *Zhuang qinwang* 莊親王, 1695-1768), the Qianlong emperor’s uncle Yinlu 胤祿, the sixteenth son of the Kangxi emperor.⁴⁵⁷ His preface is somewhat more strident, noting that Gömpojab has “...determined that the producers of images in his day have deviated from the proper course and have gone astray in their formulations of iconography. Thus, their guilt of most heinous crimes is great and for this they are to be indicted. This has resulted in people’s failure to pay respect to the excellence of Buddha.”⁴⁵⁸

Gömpojab’s own introduction also serves to call into question the orthodoxy of Chinese Buddhist images, but goes on to elevate the status of Tibetan Buddhist images in the minds of his Chinese readers, as well as inserting other subtle political references. In discussing the history of Buddhist images in China, he notes that there are two styles: the Chinese style (*Hanshi* 漢式) or Tang style (*Tangshi* 唐式), and the Indian or Brahmanic, which he calls the Fan style (*Fanshi* 梵式). He traces the origins of the Chinese style to the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (r. 141 BCE to 87 BCE), who captured a metal Buddhist image from the Xiongnu.⁴⁵⁹ Gömpojab goes on to list other early examples of images that were obtained from “the West” (South Asia).

⁴⁵⁵ mGon-po-skyabs, 36.

⁴⁵⁶ mGon-po-skyabs, 36.

⁴⁵⁷ Cai mistakenly gives the prince’s name as “Ai’yue.” mGon-po-skyabs, 34. The prince’s title in Chinese, *heshuo zhuang qinwang aiye jushi* 和碩莊親王愛月居士, is mistranslated as “Prince Ai’yue of Heshuo manor.” In Qing titles of nobility, *heshuo qinwang* was the term for a prince of the blood of the first degree, and *zhuang* here was not “manor,” but his name at investiture, therefore Prince Zhuang. The prince’s *hao* 號 was *Ai’yue jushi* 愛月居士 (“Moon-loving Householder”).

⁴⁵⁸ mGon-po-skyabs, 33.

⁴⁵⁹ The text says “則漢武北伐匈奴。得休屠金人。” T1419_21.0939a08.

They came through trade during times of peaceful coexistence with the kingdoms of the West; through the famous journey of Xuanzang (a tale that Gömpojab had translated into Tibetan⁴⁶⁰), who returned from the West with images “...manufactured by King Aśoka.”⁴⁶¹ The reference to King Aśoka, the original Ākavartin, and to peaceful trade with the West may have been sly references to the Qianlong emperor’s Ākavartin status as well as to the recent truce (1739) with the Zunghar Mongols, who were the main military and economic rivals of the Qing Empire on its western borders.⁴⁶² Peaceful relations and trade along the Silk Road had just been reestablished, reopening direct routes to India—the past and present were linked by the renaissance of enlightened rule that the Qianlong emperor provided.

Gömpojab concludes his treatment of the history of Chinese-style images with the comment “Since the Han dynasty, all Buddhist images have been made using these western ones as their models. The experts in this field handed down the art in their families...”⁴⁶³ Here he notes the roots of the Chinese style in the West, and also introduces the idea that the style was thereafter handed down within artisan families. This method of transition, he later implies, is the root of the problem with the Chinese style images. “Any deviation in dimension due to oral teaching cannot be verified and corrected” and further “It is obvious that...solemnity and perfectness may be mistakenly modified by those who have not received formal learning from their tutors.” The end result of this is not simply a question of aesthetics. Images that follow the iconometric standards attract the “admiration of all creatures” who receive merit; those that do not follow the standards “would not host the orthodox spirit.”⁴⁶⁴ The only way to ensure the proper standards is to follow the teachings of the sutras, teachings that have been conveniently

⁴⁶⁰ mGon-po-skyabs, 9.

⁴⁶¹ mGon-po-skyabs, 50.

⁴⁶² Perdue, *China Marches West*, 257.

⁴⁶³ mGon-po-skyabs, 50.

⁴⁶⁴ mGon-po-skyabs, 52.

provided by Gömpojab for the benighted Chinese patrons of Buddhist art with this unambiguous, iconometric crib sheet.

In contrast to the relatively brief and implicitly critical treatment of the history of Chinese-style images, Gömpojab presents the history of the Indian-style images in China in more lengthy and substantially more glowing terms. In fact, what he means by Indian-style is the Himalayan style of Tibetan Buddhist images, and he may use the term Indian to emphasize their closer connection to the Buddhist Holy Land in both geography and orthodoxy. His discussion, although longer than that for Chinese-style images, covers less historical span. He focuses on two key figures in the history of Tibetan Buddhist art in China: the multitalented Nepali artist and designer Anige 阿尼哥 (1245-1306),⁴⁶⁵ and a sculptor described as his Chinese disciple Liu Zhengfeng 劉正奉 or Liu Yuan 劉元,⁴⁶⁶ both of whom served at the Yuan dynasty court of Khubilai. Anige was identified and chosen by the lama Phagpa, the emperor's appointed ruler in Tibet and religious advisor, who sent him on to the court from Tibet. Throughout the text, Gömpojab always uses the full court titles for Anige and Liu Zhengfeng, emphasizing their high status. Gömpojab describes their work as "...the best in the whole nation"⁴⁶⁷ and "unparalleled."⁴⁶⁸ In a long parenthetical section (indicated by smaller type in the original), he notes that Nepal is renowned for skilled craftsmen, and among them Anige was "... the most distinguished of all," and the only artist able to successfully repair a complex statue that

⁴⁶⁵ For an introduction to Anige, see Anning Jing, "The Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi by Anige (1245-1306), a Nepali Artist at the Yuan Court," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 54, No. 1/2, (1994): 40-86.

⁴⁶⁶ His name is transposed (Liu Fengzheng) on his first appearance in Cai, but is correct subsequently. A discussion of Liu Zhengfeng and various legends associated with him appears in Hok-lam Chan 陳學霖, *Mingdai renwu yu chuanshuo* 明代人物與傳說 in *Zhongguo wen hua yan jiu suo zhuan kan* 中國文化研究所專刊, v. 13 (Beijing: Chinese University Press, 1997) 109-12.

⁴⁶⁷ mGon-po-skyabs, 51.

⁴⁶⁸ mGon-po-skyabs, 52.

displayed the various acupuncture points of the body.⁴⁶⁹ In the end, the implication of Gömpojab's introduction is clear: the Indian style is not only more iconometrically accurate and therefore spiritually efficacious but is also linked to the work of the most renowned artist of the Yuan court, and not to lineages of nameless Chinese artisans.

To sum up, Gömpojab's *Canon of Iconometry*, with its prefaces and introduction, is a concise but rich text. Previous studies have examined it in relation to philosophical issues current at the Qianlong court (Berger, 2003), or have worked to lay out the history of the text and its sources in relation to the issue of iconometry (Henss, in mGon-po-skyabs, 2000). My analysis of the text has emphasized the unmistakable political subtext found in the prefaces and the introduction. When the text dismisses the entire artistic tradition of a subject people as heterodox, in this case the history of Chinese Buddhist art, and the most strident critics are those closest to the center of power, here Prince Zhuang and Rölpe Dorjé, that part of the text is best understood in the context of imperial discourse. From this perspective, the *Canon of Iconometry* is yet another legitimating tool. With it, the Qianlong emperor was able to demonstrate his paternal wisdom and compassion to his Chinese subjects: revealing through translation and textual study the orthodox iconometry long lost, and making it available for the salvation of his people.⁴⁷⁰

The emperor's role in aiding the spread of enlightenment through the propagation of Buddhist orthodoxy links the printing of the *Canon of Iconometry* to the millennial mission of

⁴⁶⁹ Gömpojab recounts in some length the tale of the repair of the acupuncture model. mGon-po-skyabs, 51. The event is recorded in the *History of the Yuan Dynasty* (*Yuanshi* 元史). Jing Lian 景濂, et al., *Yuanshi* 元史 ("History of the Yuan Dynasty") (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1967), juan 203, 4545-46.

⁴⁷⁰ The emperor was also able to use the *Canon of Iconometry* to keep Tibetan Buddhist specialists at court in line. Berger notes cases where the emperor made fastidious corrections of iconographic sketches presented to him by the monk-artists of the imperial workshops at the Forbidden City, and suggests that it was the text that informed his corrections. Berger, *Empire*, 84. Although not cited, she may be referring to a Qianlong 41 (1776) archival record noted by Wang Jiapeng. Wang Jiapeng 王家鹏, "Zhangjia Hutuketu xiang xiao kao" 章嘉呼图克图图像小考 [A Brief Study of an Image of Chankya Hutukhtu], *Gugong Bowuyuan yuan kan* 故宫博物院院刊 4 (1987): 89. Also noted in Bartholomew, "Thangkas", 109.

the Ākavartin; and the legitimating character of the prefaces and introduction support the universality of the emperor's rule. Furthermore, by emphasizing the important role of Anige and the court of Khubilai in the transmission of the Indian style to China, Gömpojab may have been making subtle reference to the belief among court Tibetan Buddhists that the Qianlong emperor and Rölpe Dorjé were the reincarnations of Khubilai and Phagpa, a belief that was never stated explicitly in a Chinese context.⁴⁷¹ Nevertheless, in 1742 when the text was printed the Qianlong court had its Khubilai and Phagpa but no Anige. In 1744 this was amended when the emperor commissioned six Nepali artists to come to the Qing capital and work on the Yonghegong reconstruction project, the subject of the next section.

Part 2: The Nepali Artists and Tibetan Buddhist Art of the Qianlong Court

The Qing Imperial Workshops and Tibetan Buddhist Sculpture

Before detailing the case of the Nepali artists and their work and influence, I will provide some context for understanding the production of Tibetan Buddhist art at the Qianlong court. Excellent studies of the artistic production of the Qing imperial workshops have been published,⁴⁷² but a work that has been immeasurably useful to this study is *The Dragon Robe and the Cassock* (*Longpao yu jiasha* 龙袍与袈裟) by Luo Wenhua, an in-depth look at the Tibetan Buddhist material culture of the Qing court rooted in the author's exhaustive research into the

⁴⁷¹ Berger notes that the reincarnation links may not have been stated directly by Rölpe Dorjé, but were by the visiting Panchen Lama. Berger, *Empire*, 25-6.

⁴⁷² See for example Yang Boda 杨伯达, "The Development of the Ch'ien-lung Painting Academy," in *Words and Images: Chinese Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting*, ed. Alfreda Murck and Wen Fong (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) 333-356; Yang Boda, *Qingdai yuanyuanhua* 清代院画 ("Court Painting of the Qing Dynasty") (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 1993).

vast Qing archives.⁴⁷³ Luo notes that the production of Buddhist art for the court included two organizational structures in the Forbidden City: one was the Hall of Mental Cultivation Department of Production Management (*Yangxindian Zaobanchu* 養心殿造辦處, often called the Imperial Workshop, henceforth *Zaobanchu*); the other was the Hall of Rectitude (*Zhongzhengdian* 中正殿, also “Hall of Central Righteousness”, henceforth *Zhongzhengdian*), which was the center for Tibetan Buddhist activities at the Forbidden City.⁴⁷⁴ Although both had designated areas of the Forbidden City for their activities, they also had counterparts in the Yuanmingyuan where the artists and craftsmen would relocate when the court resided there. Each had its area of responsibility, but when it came to the production of Tibetan Buddhist art, the two overlapped. As we will also see, for a project like the Yonghegong reconstruction, and the prolific production of religious art and ritual objects that it required, the two departments made special arrangements to work together.

The *Zaobanchu*, as its full name indicates, was originally located in part of the Hall of Mental Cultivation during the Kangxi period.⁴⁷⁵ In Kangxi 30 (1691) most of the craft departments were moved to a building just south of the Palace of Benevolent Tranquility (*Cininggong* 慈寧宮) that had been a commissary building (*chafanfang* 茶飯房), and by Kangxi 47 (1708) all of the departments had been moved. Despite the move, the name remained.⁴⁷⁶ Luo

⁴⁷³ Luo Wenhua 罗文华, *Longpao yu jiasha : Qing gong Zangchuan f jiao wenhua kao cha* 龙袍与袈裟：清宫藏传佛教文化考察 [“The Dragon Robe and the Cassock: Investigations into the Tibetan Buddhist Culture of the Qing Palace ”] (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2005).

⁴⁷⁴ Since both *Zaobanchu* and *Zhongzhengdian* are umbrella terms for a number of different sites and departments, I will use the transliterated titles. The original *Zhongzhengdian* complex, along with the *Jianfugong* palace-garden just to its north, was destroyed by fire in 1923, but both sites were restored in a collaborative project sponsored by the Palace Museum and the China Heritage Fund. See Didi Kristen Tatlow, “From the Ashes, Tibetan Buddhism Rises in the Forbidden City,” *International Herald Tribune* 11/29/2012. <<http://rendezvous.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/29/from-the-ashes-tibetan-buddhism-rises-in-the-heart-of-the-forbidden-city/>>.

⁴⁷⁵ In the Yongzheng period, this hall became the emperor’s office and personal residence at the Forbidden City.

⁴⁷⁶ The workshop’s official status was formalized in Yongzheng 7 (1729) when a seal was cast for the workshop. Luo, *Longpao*, 418.

lists fourteen main workshops in the Zaobanchu, thirteen of them simply named according to what they produced: the gold and jade workshop, the foundry department, the clock department, the gun department, the saddle and armor workshop, the archery workshop, the enamel manufactory,⁴⁷⁷ the glass workshop, the metal workshop, the case and mounting workshop, the varnishing and wood workshop, the lantern workshop, and the helmet workshop. Many of these had sub-workshops. The fourteenth workshop was the Office of Wish Fulfillment (*Ruyiguan* 如意官), a special studio that created the finest works of decorative art and painting for the emperor's personal enjoyment. An indicator of its special status is conveyed by the name of the studio, with the use of the more elevated term *guan* 官 ("office"), rather than *zuo* 作 ("workshop") or *chu* 處 ("department"). This office managed the most renowned artists in precious materials such as jade and ivory work, but also brought together great court painters of the period for collaborative works.⁴⁷⁸

For the production of Tibetan Buddhist art specifically, the Zaobanchu worked in collaboration with the Zhongzhengdian.⁴⁷⁹ The Zhongzhengdian was located in the northwest section of the Forbidden City, just north of the Pavilion of Raining Flowers, the Qianlong emperor's personal Tibetan-Buddhist chapel in the Forbidden City. In 1697, the Zhongzhengdian, which had been a Daoist shrine in the Ming period, was transformed into a Tibetan Buddhist chapel and was tasked with statue making and ritual practices such as regular

⁴⁷⁷ Manufactory for *chang* 廠.

⁴⁷⁸ Yang, "Development," 336. Another important department, covered by Yang in depth, was the Painting Academy Department (*Huayuanchu* 畫院處). Yang, "Development," and Yang, "Qingdai." Yang suggests that it was responsible for paintings in general for the court, and based on the ranks of its directors, was of higher status than the other workshops. Yang, "Development," 334.

⁴⁷⁹ For details on the original Hall of Rectitude, see Wang Jiapeng, "Zhongzhengdian yu Qinggong Zangchuan fojiao" 中正殿與清宮藏傳佛教 ("The Hall of Rectitude and Qing Palace Tibetan Buddhism"), *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 53, no. 2 (1991): 61.

sutra chanting.⁴⁸⁰ The department in charge of these activities was the Zhongzhengdian Sutra Chanting Department (*Zhongzhengdian Nianjingchu* 中正殿念經處).⁴⁸¹

Luo describes two kinds of lamas⁴⁸² who worked at Zhongzhengdian: eunuch lamas, who lived at the site, did menial tasks and assisted with rituals; and lamas from outside the palace who were associated with the Department of Lama Correspondence (*Lama Yinwuchu* 喇嘛印務處) of the capital. These lamas had higher status, and were tasked with performing rituals and producing statues and thangkas, as well as ritual objects and illuminated manuscripts. They resided in monasteries outside of the Forbidden City, and came in daily to work in the palace.⁴⁸³ These lamas had a complex status in the court bureaucracy, coming under the management of the Sutra Chanting Department, the Department of Lama Correspondence, and the Imperial Household Department (who paid their salary).⁴⁸⁴

The lamas' artistic production was similarly complex. They would craft the wax models, but the various relevant workshops of the Zaobanchu would produce the actual statues and add gilding or inlay.⁴⁸⁵ In some cases, famous craftsmen would be assigned to work on Buddhist projects, and Luo provides a list of specialists in various media whose names are recorded in relation to Buddhist projects.⁴⁸⁶ The lamas would perform the proper rituals throughout the process, and would finally consecrate the statues with inserted consecration items (C.

⁴⁸⁰ Luo, *Longpao*, 413.

⁴⁸¹ The department was also given an official seal in Yongzheng 7 (1729). Ibid., 414.

⁴⁸² I suspect Luo is using the term lama as a general term for Tibetan Buddhist monks. There is a distinction between regular monks and the more highly trained lamas in the tradition, but in general usage in Chinese this distinction is not followed.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., 416.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 421.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 425.

zhuangzang 裝藏; T. *gzuns-gzug*)⁴⁸⁷ and a final consecration ritual. In the case of statues, depending on the importance of the work, the lama sculptors would be given more or less supervision. Less important works were left up to the lamas, who made the models and did the rituals with little supervision. For more important projects, higher ranking lamas or even *khutukhtu* would be consulted on iconography, consecration and other specifics.⁴⁸⁸ Luo notes that the lamas were better treated by the emperor than their secular artisan counterparts. In documentary records, the emperor was always polite, referred to them as “good lamas” and other positive terms, and never criticized them.⁴⁸⁹ Other craftsmen were often punished severely for their mistakes. Luo recounts a case in which an error was made in the iconography of a Buddha statue produced in the Zaobanchu.⁴⁹⁰ The supervisors were docked three or six months’ salary, depending on their rank, and the craftsmen who did the work were caned forty times each. Conversely, if their work was praised by the emperor, they were rewarded.

For a special project, such as the Yonghegong reconstruction, a satellite workshop could be set up temporarily for the production of whatever was needed. In the case of the Yonghegong, one such workshop was the Buddhist Statuary Crafting Department (*Zaofochu* 造佛處), moved from Yuanmingyuan to Yonghegong in Qianlong 9.⁴⁹¹ This was a special arrangement made for the convenience of an unusual group of craftsmen summoned to court from faraway Nepal for the Yonghegong project.

⁴⁸⁷ Tibetan from Valrae Reynolds, Amy Heller, and Janet Gyatso, *Catalogue of the Newark Museum Tibetan Collection: 3, Sculpture and Painting* (Newark, NJ: The Newark Museum, 1986), 56.

⁴⁸⁸ Luo, *Longpao*, 416.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 418.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 426.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 596.

The Emperor's Summoning of the Nepali Artists to the Court

In Qianlong 9 (1744), the year Yonghegong was officially reopened as a monastic college, a group of six Nepali artists arrived at court, and Luo suggests that they were brought to the capital specifically for the Yonghegong reconstruction project.⁴⁹² They stayed until the end of Qianlong 11 (1747), when they were permitted to return home, laden with gifts and money. During their brief tenure, they produced sculpture and decorative arts for Yonghegong and other projects and trained Chinese artisans, influencing the later, increasingly prolific production of Tibetan Buddhist art for the court. The general lack of awareness in Chinese and Western scholarship of the importance of these skilled artists and craftsmen may be due to the fact that many of the relevant court documents were written in Manchu, and Luo provides a valuable Chinese translation and analysis of these sources.⁴⁹³ My discussion of the Nepali sculptors summarizes Luo's findings.

Diplomatic relations with Nepal had been only recently initiated prior to the Yonghegong reconstruction project. In Yongzheng 10 (1732) the Qing court initiated relations with a Nepali kingdom recorded as Balebu 巴勒布 in the Qing records.⁴⁹⁴ In Yongzheng 12 (1734) ambassadors from Nepal were given permission to come to Beijing and present tribute. Luo notes that the foundation of this relationship was mutual support for the Gelug School among the Qing emperor, the Tibetan regent Polhanas (*Poluonai* 頗羅鼐 1728 - 1747), and the Nepali king.⁴⁹⁵ A small-scale tribute-trade relationship continued into the reign of the Qianlong emperor, interrupted only by the later conflicts with the Gurkha kingdom in the 1790s noted in the text of the *Lamashuo* stele at Yonghegong.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 596.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 583-97. The Nepalis are noted briefly in Reynolds, et al., *Catalogue*, 26.

⁴⁹⁴ Luo, *Longpao*, 584. I suspect that Balebu may refer to Malla, the name of the kingdom before the unification of Nepal under the Gurkhas in 1768. Luo notes that the Chinese transliteration is based on the Tibetan pronunciation.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 585.

A Manchu language court record, the *Copies of Palace Memorials of the Council of State* (*Junjichu lufu* 軍機處錄副, hereafter JJCLF), recorded that on the third day of the second month of Qianlong 9 (March 16, 1744), Suo Bai 索拜, the Grand Minister Resident of Tibet (*Zhuzang Dacheng* 駐藏大臣), was charged by the emperor with instructing Polhanas to “... find 3 artisans skilled in the casting of bronze Buddhas and 3 Balebu artisans skilled in carving, burnishing and enchasing of coral, turquoise, lapis lazuli, jade and other jewelry,” and to have them pack their tools and come to the capital.⁴⁹⁶ On the way, they should also make drawings of famous Buddhist statues in Tibet, such as the *Maitreya Buddha* in the Jokhang Temple and works at the Potala, in order to make replicas once they arrive in Beijing.⁴⁹⁷ After a month of searching, Polhanas found the following individuals: Cadama, Balusing, and G’angg’ada, who were expert in bronze statues, and Yanag’ala, Danadibu and Balu, who were lapidary specialists.⁴⁹⁸ The six artisans were escorted to the Jokhang Temple and the Potala in Lhasa, Tibet; then, on the eighth day of the fourth month of Qianlong 9 (May 19, 1744), they were escorted to Sichuan, and from there to the capital, arriving in Beijing on the evening of the 29th day of the eighth month (October 4, 1744) after four months of travel.⁴⁹⁹

The Nepali Craftsmen at the Qing Court

A court record cited by Luo discusses arrangements made for the artists’ work and residence.⁵⁰⁰ After their arrival in the capital, they were provided with a translator by the Imperial Household Department, a disciple of Rölpe Dorjé named A’wangzhundan’ergelong 阿

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 589.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 589.

⁴⁹⁸ Romanization of the Manchu transliteration of the Nepalis’ names follows Luo.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 590.

⁵⁰⁰ This section summarizes Ibid., 590-92. The original court record is provided on p. 653.

旺准丹爾格籠. The three lapidary craftsmen were provided with two rooms in the Zaobanchu in the Forbidden City, but in the evening they were to reside in Fuyou Monastery 福佑寺 under the supervision of the lama abbot (*shouling lama* 首領喇嘛) Luopuzangceleng 羅卜藏策楞. Fuyou Monastery, still extant, is located just outside of the western walls of the Forbidden City along the moat, and was therefore a convenient spot for their residence.⁵⁰¹ The three bronze statue makers were sent to Yonghegong to work in the Buddhist Statuary Crafting Department, and were supervised by the Director (*langzhong* 郎中) Fobao 佛保. They also resided at Yonghegong. Their most prominent work there was the three gilt bronze statues that make up the *Buddhas of the Three Ages*, (Fig. 27) the main icons of the highest-ranked building on the site, the Palace of Harmony and Peace. The three artists remained there until the completion of the Yonghegong project, after which, in the first month of Qianlong 10 (February, 1745), they were stationed at the Hall of Mental Cultivation Imperial Workshop with the others and presumably resided at Fuyou Monastery as well.

During their time working for the court, the six Nepali artisans were well treated, and received monetary rewards and even the personal attention of the emperor. Their stipend was generous. The court ranked them by skill and rewarded them accordingly. Danadibu was ranked the highest, followed by Yanag'ala, then the three bronze specialists, Cadama, Balusing, and G'angg'ada. The last one, probably an apprentice or assistant, may be listed differently in the court records, as Balu in the Manchu record but as Majin 嘛錦 in the Imperial Workshop

⁵⁰¹ The same record states that in the event that they were to work at the Yuanmingyuan Imperial Workshop, they would reside in Yongning Monastery 永寧寺, and would be supervised by the lama abbot Manigelong 馬尼格籠. However, Luo demonstrates that they probably never worked at Yuanmingyuan as there were few jobs there requiring their skills, and furthermore, as noted above, the foundry workshop was moved from Yuanmingyuan to Yonghegong to be used during the reconstruction project.

records.⁵⁰² The higher ranking artisans received four *liang* for food and expenses each month, eighteen *liang* each season for clothes, and the lowest ranked (Balu/Majin) received two *liang* for food and expenses and fifteen *liang* for clothes. In the winter they were given twenty *jin* of firewood and eight *jin* of charcoal.⁵⁰³ In the first month of Qianlong 10 (February-March, 1745), Yanag'ala and Balusing came down with an illness soon after the completion of the Yonghegong project. The Emperor made special arrangements for the imperial physician Shao Zhengwen 邵正文 and a lama physician from Yonghegong to examine them, and he urged the physicians to care for them using Tibetan medicine.⁵⁰⁴ This demonstrates not only the emperor's personal involvement with and concern for the Nepali artists, but also the regard he had for the Tibetan medical specialist at Yonghegong. However, I suspect his suggestion to use Tibetan medicine with the Nepalis also may have stemmed from his assumption that it would be either more familiar or otherwise more suited to the men than Chinese medicine, rather than from a sense of the superiority of Tibetan medicine. Shao Zhengwen was, after all, the imperial physician and is listed by name, unlike the lama physician from Yonghegong.

Court documents also record four instances of rewards given to the artists. The first instance was in the ninth month of Qianlong 9 (October, 1744), when the three bronze statue craftsmen were given 30 *liang* each for their work at Yonghegong. The second instance was in the twelfth month of Qianlong 9 (January, 1745), when the two higher ranking lapidaries received ten *liang*, Majin received five *liang*, and the three bronze craftsmen also received five *liang*. The third time was in the fourth month of the following year (May, 1745), when the group was rewarded with one hundred *liang*. In the twelfth month of Qianlong 11 (January-February,

⁵⁰² Ibid., 592.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., quoting the *Zaobanchu Huojidang* 造辦處活計檔, 591.

⁵⁰⁴ Paraphrased from Ibid., 592 (misprinting 邵正人 for 邵正文). The original court record is provided on p. 656.

1747), the Emperor gave his permission for the group to return to Nepal, saying “You have stayed in the capital for several years, and you can return home as soon as the project is finished.”⁵⁰⁵ The final reward came before the group departed. They were granted rewards by rank: Danadibu was given the 21 *liang* of silver; Yanag’ala was given 18 *liang* of silver; Cadama, Balusing, and G’angg’ada were given 17 *liang* of silver; and Majin was given 10 *liang* of silver.⁵⁰⁶

The Work of the Nepali Artists at the Qianlong Court

According to Luo, the Nepalis work for the court was twofold: first, artistic production for Tibetan Buddhist temples and shrines; and second, training of local craftsmen.⁵⁰⁷ Regarding their artistic production, Luo points to records that highlight the diversity of religious art they produced: making sculptural icons in various media; inlaying lapis-lazuli inscriptions into statues; making a Yamantaka Mandala (Plate X); and making a decorative altar screen (*huanmen* 歡門), to name a few.⁵⁰⁸ In relation to their training of court artists, Luo also provides ample documentation.⁵⁰⁹ One comparison that I suggest provides evidence for both the Nepalis work and for the legacy of their training is found in two copies of the *Phagpa Lokeśvara*, an important Tibetan icon housed in the Potala in Lhasa, the palace that was the seat of government and residence of the Dalai Lamas.⁵¹⁰ Both copies, made of gilded sandalwood, were sent as gifts to the Qianlong emperor from Tibet, and the significance of these gifts will be addressed in the next chapter. One of these copies is the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* (Fig 107), dated by

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 592.

⁵⁰⁶ Paraphrased from Ibid., 591-92.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 594.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 592. *Huanmen* can also refer more generally to decorative doorways, but given the Nepalis specialization in Buddhist art, I assume this refers to the altar screen. Today these are most often made of embroidered, silk textiles, but I assume the Nepalis crafted one of wood or metal.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 594.

⁵¹⁰ Ian Alsop, “Phagpa Lokeśvara of the Potala,” *Orientalism* 21, no. 4 (1990): 51-61.

inscription to 1745, and the other is the *Yuhuage Phagpa Lokeśvara* (Fig. 108), dated by inscription to 1752, and housed in the Pavilion of Raining Flowers (*Yuhuage*) in the Forbidden City.⁵¹¹

Luo notes that on their journey from Nepal the artists were to stop in Lhasa and visit the Potala and the Jokhang Monastery, where they were to make sketches of famous icons there so that they could make copies of these works in Beijing.⁵¹² Based on the descriptions and transliteration of the deity's name provided in the JJCLF, Luo identifies one such work was the *Phagpa Lokeśvara* at the Potala.⁵¹³ For this particular statue the Nepalis did not copy the work itself since it was sent as a gift to the court, but very probably created the decorative back-support (*beiguang* 背光; T. *rgyab yol*) in bronze for the Yonghegong statue.⁵¹⁴ (Fig. 107) It frames the *Phagpa Lokeśvara* with a pointed arch, tapering in at the bottom. The entire surface is covered with images of deities and mythical creatures that emerge in high relief from a low relief background of repeated spiraling flame motifs.

This back-support is known as the Six-ornament Throne of Enlightenment (T. *rgyan drug rgyab yol*), also known by the Sanskrit term *torana* ("gateway"), and is found frequently in the

⁵¹¹ The inscription for the 1745 sculpture is reproduced in Jia Yang 甲央, Wang Mingxing 王明星, and Dawaciren 达瓦次仁, *Bao Zang: Zhongguo Xizang Lishi Wenwu* 宝藏: 中国西藏历史文物 ("Precious Deposits: Historical Relics of Tibet, China"), (Beijing: Zhaohua chubanshe, 2000) 33-34, and for the 1752 image in Palace Museum, ed., *Qing Gong Zangchuan fojiao wenwu* 清宫藏传佛教文物 ("Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism in the Qing Palace") (Beijing: Gugong bowuyuan zijincheng chubanshe, 1992), 251. I have not seen either work in person and base my analysis on the few published photographs of each work.

⁵¹² Luo, *Longpao*, 589.

⁵¹³ Luo does not use the name "Phagpa Lokeśvara," which I take from Alsop. Luo notes that it is a form of Avalokiteśvara called Lokeśvara, and he suggests that it refers to one particular sandalwood statue kept in the Potala. He provides photographs of the original Phagpa Lokeśvara, but he provides no further discussion of the image. Ibid., 593. He also notes briefly the Yuhuage version. Ibid., 397.

⁵¹⁴ Although similar to the more familiar mandorla, the back-support does not exclusively represent the physical luminosity of the deity, so I am using back-support. The back-support material is listed as bronze in the Yonghegong catalogue of Buddhist statues. Niu Song 牛颂, ed., *Yonghegong Foxiang Bao Dian* 雍和宫佛像宝典 ("Buddhist Statues in Yonghegong"), (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 2002) 152. Given the Nepali style of the back-support, it is possible that the statue was sent with the back-support included. However, a Śākyamuni statue sent as an earlier gift from the same Tibetan leader as the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*, Polhanas, has a base and back-support that are unmistakably products of Qing court workshops, suggesting that it was sent without a back-support. That work will be discussed in the next chapter.

Tibetan Buddhist art of the Newari artists of Nepal and in Tibetan work modeled on the Newari style.⁵¹⁵ It is seen most frequently in images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, high lamas, and other enlightened beings. At the pinnacle of the arch is a recurring image in Buddhist decorative art: a stern Garuda figure, wings outstretched, grasps with his claws the tails of two elegant *nāginī*, whose outstretched arms supplicate him while their other arms grasp gems. At shoulder level of the central icon are two *makara*, whose curling trunks, tongues and fur echo the spirals of the *nāginīs*’ serpent bodies and the flames that encircle them all. The *makara* stand on a crossbeam in the form of a *gandi*, a wooden signal gong used to call monks together in monasteries. Supporting the crossbeam on each side is a series of figures: at the top, a *vamana* (dwarf), symbol of strength, presses up the crossbeam with his arms while riding on a *sharabha* (a composite creature, in this case lion and horse), which in turn is supported by a Chinese-style lion standing on the back of a diminutive elephant on a lotus. The six types of creatures and beings represent the Buddhist “six perfections”. The rounded forms, childlike proportions and implausible balancing act they perform give the figures an almost playful quality.

The back-support on the 1745 and 1752 images are strikingly similar, and Terese Bartholomew describes the style of the 1752 back-support as “typically Nepalese.”⁵¹⁶ Since the Nepali artists returned home in 1747, five years before the 1752 date, I suggest that the back-support of the 1745 image was probably made by the Nepalis, and the 1752 back-support by court artists following their models. Although it is impossible to be definitive in this case, two differences are telling. One is the medium: the 1752 back-support seems to be not bronze but carved wood, based on the cracks and surface texture underneath where the *makara* on the right is missing, and wood was by far a more frequently used medium by court artists for altars and

⁵¹⁵ Robert Beer, *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999) 88-9.

⁵¹⁶ Bartholomew, *Thangkas*, 108.

architectural decorations. The other important difference is stylistic: on closer examination and comparison of the back-support in each, the decorations of the 1752 work seem less detailed, the individual floriated flames larger and in a form common to court-produced Tibetan Buddhist works.

The Significance of the Nepali Craftsmen to the Qing Court

What might have inspired the summoning of these artists from such a distant kingdom? Like many of the Qianlong emperor's projects, the significance of their work at court could be understood on a number of levels. The first, suggested by Luo, is simple pragmatism. He notes that the Yonghegong project was a huge effort that was beyond the capacity of the Imperial Workshops, requiring as it did specialized skills and knowledge of Tibetan Buddhist styles and rituals, which were unfamiliar to the local artisans.⁵¹⁷ Although I assume that the lama artists of the Zhongzhengdian may have had such skills, they may have been few in number and more importantly lacked the cachet that the Nepalis brought with them. They were both exponents of the "Indian style" so esteemed in the *Canon of Iconometry*, and evoked the most renowned Nepali artist in Chinese history, Anige, and the era of Mongol rule during the Yuan dynasty.⁵¹⁸ They also trained a generation of local craftsmen to carry forward their style and methods, in the way that Anige was reported to have trained the Chinese sculptor Liu Zhengfeng.

⁵¹⁷ Luo, *Longpao*, 596.

⁵¹⁸ Other remnants of Anige's work that may have kept his memory current in the Qing capital were the White Chörten (*baita* 白塔, also "White Stūpa") at the Miaoying Monastery 妙應寺 in Beijing, and the critically important bronze statue of Mahākāla (discussed in Chapter 2) linked with the artist's legacy, also enshrined in Beijing. The White Chörten remains the oldest and tallest pagoda in the city, and it received continuing imperial attention during the High Qing period. It was renovated under the patronage of the Kangxi emperor in 1688 and Qianlong emperor in 1753, as attested to by stele at the site. See Herbert Franke, "Consecration of the White Stūpa in 1279," *Asia Major* 7, no. 1 (1994): 158-59. For more on the Mahākāla image, see Grupper, *Manchu Imperial Cult*, 165 and 124, n.55. The image's current location is unknown. Berger notes that it has been "lost since at least World War II." Berger, *Empire*, 24.

While the skills of these artists and the fame of Nepali Tibetan Buddhist art may have been enough of a motivation, the Qianlong emperor's penchant for multilayered meanings surely would have attracted him to associations between the Nepalis and Anige and implicitly the emperor and Khubilai. Gömpojab's introduction to the *Canon of Iconometry* in 1742 demonstrates that the fame of Nepali artists in general, and Anige in particular, was alive at court when the Qianlong emperor made his request for Nepali artists in March of 1744. The Nepalis were not only masterful craftsmen, their distant origins and historical precedents were erudite supporting points in the vast argument for Qing legitimacy to which Yonghegong was in part dedicated. At this monastery, which was staffed by Mongol monks and lamas and an important destination for elite Mongols visiting the capital, the argument for Qing legitimacy and the universal rule of the Qianlong emperor was further expressed by the seeming comprehensiveness of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon enshrined there, upon which the production of which the *Canon of Iconometry* and the Nepalis were so influential.

Part 3: The Qing Court Tibetan Buddhist Pantheon

The vast array of deities at Yonghegong can be overwhelming. Whereas the axial halls at the site enshrine only a few main icons, each accentuated by dramatic size and/or the splendor of an ornate back-support, the side halls display countless gilded and colored deities in differing sizes, on altars and in cases, backed by opulent back-supports or by colorful painted backdrops. The immense and varied collection of deities and their iconographic complexity suggest that the complete Tibetan Buddhist pantheon is on view. However, further study of the pantheon as it was understood at the Qianlong court reveals a more complicated situation: throughout the Qianlong period the members of the group continually changed and evolved in what Berger has

termed a “shifting pantheon”, and she and Luo cover the topic in some depth.⁵¹⁹ A number of pantheons was produced during the period in printed, painted and sculpted forms. They fall broadly into two types that I designate “reference” pantheons and “practice” pantheons. All were almost certainly supervised by Rölpe Dorjé, but none is identical to the others in the specific figures included or in their arrangement.

Despite this ambiguity, the fundamental message of the encyclopedic and seemingly comprehensive character of these pantheons can be understood to be the universality of the Qianlong emperor’s rule, and his “domestication” of the pantheon is analogous to his domestication of the Chinese literary and artistic tradition discussed previously. In this section I will highlight two aspects of Qing pantheon formation as they relate to Yonghegong.⁵²⁰ The first briefly revisits the issue of the joint linear and spatial forms of hierarchical organization introduced in Chapter Two, and how they are reflected in the pantheons in general. The second interprets the Qing pantheons from the perspective of the ideology of imperial universalism.

Qing Court Pantheons and their Spatial Organization

The two best-known Qianlong-era pantheons are examples of what I call reference pantheons because the figures in them were selected from various sources and seem to be organized to simplify determining the specific iconography and prayers (mantra and *dhāraṇī*) for each.⁵²¹ They have been widely reproduced and may be roughly contemporary with the 1744 inauguration of Yonghegong as a fully functioning monastery and with the Qianlong emperor’s

⁵¹⁹ Berger, *Empire*, 110-16; Luo, *Longpao*, 53-75.

⁵²⁰ Berger, *Empire*, 88-116. Luo, *Longpao*, 53-75.

⁵²¹ Of course, their ultimate goal was to foster practice, but unlike the sculptural pantheons and those that illustrate the various court-produced Tibetan Buddhist Canons, part of their intended function seems to have been ease of reference.

formal initiation into Tibetan Buddhist practice in 1745.⁵²² One is the *Three Hundred Icons* (*Sanbai foxiang ji* 三百佛像集; T. *sKu brnyan brgya phrag gsum*) dated by Luo to ca. 1738-57, printed from woodblocks, and with a preface by Rölpe Dorjé.⁵²³ The other, also linked to Rölpe Dorjé, is *In Praise of the Sacred Images of All the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Saints/Sages* (*Zhu Fo Pusa Shengxiang Zan* 諸佛菩薩聖像讚).⁵²⁴ A more ambitious work, it is a series of 360 monochrome painted images with the figures' names provided in Chinese, Tibetan, Manchu and Mongolian. Each image is preceded by a page with a ritual text in Chinese. Luo suggests that an earlier version was completed in 1749, but the version known today was compiled by Prince Zhuang and dates to 1756.⁵²⁵

According to Berger and Luo, *In Praise of the Sacred Images* was probably a work for internal reference at the court based on the Chinese text and multilingual identifications, as well as by hybrid style of the figures.⁵²⁶ To the contrary, the *Three Hundred Icons* was probably intended for distribution to Mongolian Tibetan Buddhist monks, based on the fact that the preface to the text is in Tibetan and Mongolian, and due to the prominence in the pantheon of

⁵²² For the date of the emperor's initiation, see Tuguan, *Zhangjia*, 183.

⁵²³ The full title is *Shangshi, Benzun, Sanbao, Hufa Deng Zi Liang Tian — San Bai Fo Xiang Ji* 上師本尊三寶護法等資糧田三百佛像集 (T. *Bla ma yi dam mchog gsum bka' sdod dang bcas pa'i tshogs zhing gi sku brnyan sum brgya'i grangs tshang ba*). Luo, *Longpao*, 60. The text is reproduced in Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje and Sushama Lohia, *Lalitavajra's Manual of Buddhist Iconography* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1994). Slightly better reproductions of the images, but none of the accompanying ritual texts, are provided in Blanche C. Olschak and Wangyal Thupten, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973) 113-185. Another example of a reference pantheon, probably based on the printed *Three Hundred Icons*, is a series of three thangka paintings in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History (Cat. No. 70.2/ 8377 A, B and C). Berger, *Empire*, 115-6.

⁵²⁴ The most complete reproduction is found in Hartmut Walravens, *Buddhist Literature of the Manchus: A Catalogue of the Manchu Holdings in the Raghu Vira Collection at the International Academy of Indian Culture* (New Delhi: The Academy, 1981) 21-56; 99-280. The images, but not the preface or accompanying ritual texts for each image, is reproduced in Walter Eugene Clark and Alexander August von Staël-Holstein, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp, 1965 [1937]) 225-314. An important early study is Nicholas von Staël-Holstein, "Remarks on the Chu Fo P'u Sa Sheng Hsiang Tsan," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Library*, v. 1.1 (1928) 78-80.

⁵²⁵ Luo, *Longpao*, 71 (for the 1749 date) and 69 (fig. 1.3-6 caption) for 1756.

⁵²⁶ Berger, *Empire*, 112-3.

forms of Mahākāla, protector of the Mongols.⁵²⁷ The pages are in the long horizontal format of Tibetan scriptures (evoking the palm leaves of the original Buddhist sutras), and the figures are presented three to a page, alternating with pages that present the specific mantra and *dhāraṇī* for the individual icons. Luo cites the Mongolian preface of the work that asserts it presents all of the seven major classifications of deities: guru (mahāsiddha, high-ranking lama, etc.), yidam⁵²⁸ (“tutelary deity”; *benzun* 本尊; T. *yi dam*), buddha, bodhisattva, arhat, *ḍākinī* (“female sky-strider”, *kongxingmu* 空行母; T. *mkha' 'gro ma*), and *dharmapāla* (“Dharma protector”, *hufashen* 護法神; T. *chos skyong*), along with a few other types.⁵²⁹ The same seven major types also make up the sculptural pantheon at Yonghegong, and it is on this basis that I refer to the pantheon there as comprehensive.⁵³⁰

Luo suggests that the *Three Hundred Icons* was produced before *In Praise of the Sacred Images*, and was a departure from earlier illustrated pantheons from Tibet in that it was a compilation of deities from numerous texts, classified and organized, rather than a presentation of deities in the order that they appear in specific ritual texts called *sādhana* (T. *sgrub thabs*), in which deities were invoked and visualized in a set, linear sequence.⁵³¹ Furthermore, Luo argues that the Qing texts and later sculptural pantheons seem to be organized according to both *sādhana* and, in what was probably a contribution of Rölpe Dorjé, mandala systems of

⁵²⁷ Berger, *Empire*, 114. Luo notes the languages only. Luo, *Longpao*, 60.

⁵²⁸ Although I am using the Sanskrit form as standard for most deities in this study, the Sanskrit form often provided for this deity, *iṣṭadeva* or *iṣṭadevatā*, seems to be borrowed from Hindu Bhakti-yoga (where it refers to an actual deity rather than a projection of the mind), and does not appear in Sanskrit Buddhist tantric texts. Therefore, I will use the Tibetan term which is both more accurate and familiar due to its widespread use. See John Blofeld, *The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet: A Practical Guide to the Theory, Purpose, and Techniques of Tantric Meditation* (New York: Penguin, 1992) 176.

⁵²⁹ Luo, *Longpao*, 62.

⁵³⁰ Niu, *Yonghegong Foxiang*, 126-8.

⁵³¹ Luo, *Longpao*, 62.

organization, more evidence that spatial forms of organization became widespread in court projects in the Qianlong period.⁵³²

Unlike the two-dimensional reference pantheons discussed above, the sculptural pantheons produced for the Qianlong court and housed in chapels in the Forbidden City were designed for specific forms of practice. One might suspect that their arrangement would more explicitly reflect spatial organization than printed or painted versions simply because it uses three dimensional objects that are experienced in space rather than sequentially in a text. The reality is more complicated, as Luo and Berger have demonstrated. The Pavilion of Raining Flowers (1750) structures an elaborate sculptural and painted pantheon, hierarchically arranged within the floors of this four-storied building and devoted to a specific series of texts and practices.⁵³³ Later examples include the pantheons in the Tower of Precious Forms (*Baoxianglou* 寶相樓, ca. 1771), and the Tower of Buddhist Efflorescence (*Fanhualou* 梵華樓, ca. 1774), two buildings that Luo notes are the only surviving members of a set of eight known as “Six Classes Buddhist Towers” (*Liupinfolou* 六品佛樓).⁵³⁴ These two-story, seven bay halls, like the Pavilion of Raining Flowers, lay out collections of icons that also represent a progressive, hierarchical sequence of practices, in this case horizontally rather than from ground floor to

⁵³² Ibid., 63.

⁵³³ Berger, *Empire*, 97-104. Table 1 on p. 100 lists the various sculptures and their arrangements and classification. The ground floor includes deities related to *Kriyātantra* practices; the second floor to those of the *Caryātantra*; the third floor to those of the *Yogatantra*; and the fourth floor to those of the *Anuttarayogatantras*. The thangkas in the pavilion were studied by Luo. Luo Wenhua, “Yuhuage tangka bian xi xu lun-- jian lun yu ‘zhu fo pu sa sheng xiang zan’ zhi guan xi” 雨华阁唐卡辨析续论——兼论与《诸佛菩萨圣像赞》之关系 [“Analysis of the thangkas in the Pavilion of Raining Flowers—their relationship to the *Zhufo Pusa shengxiang zan*”] *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 (Palace Museum Journal) 4 (2002): 38-48.

⁵³⁴ The six classes are the types of texts referenced in the six chapels flanking the central ones. They include the same types referenced in the Pavilion of Raining Flowers, but subdivide the *Anuttarayogatantras* and add another type of text to make six classes. In the Tower of Precious Forms, for example, they are from right to left in order: *Kriyātantra* (Devotion class), *Caryātantra* (Action-ritual class), and *Yogatantra* (Yoga class), known as the Three Outer Classes of Tantra, followed by *Anuttarayoga* Mother Tantra and Father Tantra classes, and finally the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Transcendent Wisdom class). Berger, *Empire*, 107, Table 2. The later Hall of Buddhist Efflorescence organizes the sequence differently. Ibid., 110, Table 4.

upper floors. In each bay of the upper floor the deities germane to that level of practice are arranged and displayed, with a main altar flanked by cases housing large collections of sculptures in niches on the walls to either side. Berger calculates that the number of individual statues in the Tower of Precious Forms was 787,⁵³⁵ and Luo similarly estimates that the number in the Tower of Buddhist Efflorescence was approximately 750.

Berger emphasizes that all of these pantheons “never deviate from a text- or word-based understanding [of the graduated Tibetan Buddhist path to enlightenment].”⁵³⁶ Furthermore, the examples here were specifically for the personal studies, meditations and devotions of individuals, either the emperor himself or his mother and other members of the imperial family. Yonghegong, as a more public site devoted to the education of Mongol monks as well as to a wider array of important ritual and devotional practices, presents a different kind of sculptural pantheon and a very different kind of spatial organization, one that may be another example of the complex multicultural synthesis found at the site.

As noted in Chapter Two, although Yonghegong and other Qing Tibetan Buddhist sites primarily enshrine Tibetan Buddhist deities, they generally follow the linear/axial hierarchy of Chinese religious sites that is based on the courtyard compounds typical of palace and elite residential architecture. The symbolic apex of the hierarchy is typically the hall dedicated to buddhas; at Yonghegong this is the Palace of Harmony and Peace and its *Buddhas of the Three Ages*, the hall akin to the Hall of Supreme Harmony at the Forbidden City. Curiously, at many Chinese Buddhist sites and particularly at Qing Tibetan Buddhist sites the buddha hall is followed by technically lower-ranking but aesthetically and architecturally more complex buildings and sculptures, of which the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness and its *Colossal Maitreya*

⁵³⁵ Berger, *Empire*, 106. Luo, *Longpao*, 74.

⁵³⁶ Berger, *Empire*, 96.

Bodhisattva are typical examples. Other kinds of deities populate the side halls at most of these sites. Yonghegong, however, differs from other Qing Tibetan Buddhist sites in the vastness of its sculptural pantheon. In enshrining a seemingly complete pantheon for elite Mongol and Tibetan visitors to the capital, and more importantly for Mongol monks, whose education and ritual practices were aimed at the salvation of the emperor, the state, and the cosmos, the very comprehensiveness of that pantheon and the centrality of the Ākavartin-emperor in it argue for understanding these pantheons as expressions of the ideology of imperial universalism.⁵³⁷

The Qing Court Tibetan Buddhist Pantheons and Imperial Universalism

As representations of the deities and realized masters of the Tibetan Buddhist universe, the connection of the Qing pantheons to the Ākavartin's mission is clear: they all were designed to further the spread of universal enlightenment. Although Luo focused on the sources, development and specific makeup of the various Qing pantheons and their contribution to the evolution of Buddhist thought,⁵³⁸ Berger emphasized in part a Buddhist understanding of their shifting character, for instance noting that the sheer "immensity and initial incomprehensibility" of the vast pantheons produced by the court suggest, even demand, to be approached using the kind of gradual, stage-based system that Tibetan Buddhism provided.⁵³⁹ This is certainly the case in the sculptural pantheons of the Forbidden City, which were designed for a specific, progressive program of education and practice for an individual or small group of elite

⁵³⁷ One could argue that icons housed in the temples at Chengde taken collectively might perform a similar religious and political function to the more comprehensive individual pantheon at Yonghegong. Unfortunately, due to losses at the Chengde temples it is difficult to discuss their individual pantheons in detail at this point. Even more troubling is that the losses were not limited to the early twentieth century, but have continued as the recent case of Li Haitao has shown. "Official Executed for Stealing, Selling State Cultural Relics," Xinhua Net, November 19, 2010, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-11/19/c_13613561.htm>.

⁵³⁸ Luo, *Longpao*, 54.

⁵³⁹ Berger, *Empire*, 89.

practitioners. Yonghegong and other more public sites had their pantheons laid out to facilitate a broader array of ritual practice and education that relates to imperial ideology in other ways.

Berger notes that, like the emperor's comprehensive collections of art and literature, these pantheons were also collections, in this case of individual "visionary experiences."⁵⁴⁰ The status of the Qing pantheons as collections, and the role of collections in the Qianlong court, also allows an interpretation that emphasizes imperial universalism. These visionary experiences were, from this perspective, "domesticated" in the court pantheons, in the same way that the history of Chinese painting or literature was likewise organized, arranged, edited and standardized in Qianlong era imperial collections. What I am calling domesticated court collections may bring to mind the later "modalities" of rule that were such important tools of nineteenth-century European imperialism, classified by Cohn as Surveillance, Survey, Enumerative, Historiographic and Museological.⁵⁴¹ These were all tools that worked to organize and classify the contents and histories of the colonies of the empire, in Cohn's case the British Empire in India, as a demonstration of overwhelming imperial might. However, unlike those modalities, most of the Qianlong era collections were not part of a public display, a point I argued in Chapter Two and Berger, citing Wang Jiapeng, also noted in relation to the pantheons. The collections were for the emperor's personal use, notwithstanding the impossibility of his ever seeing, reading or experiencing all of what these colossal collections contained. If anything, the most salient function of such collections may have been psychological, giving the universal emperor the sense that he had determined the borders of his cultural empire (however flexible those borders would later be) and could access any part of it at will.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 89.

⁵⁴¹ Cohn, *Colonialism*, 3-11.

However, among all of these imperial collections the Yonghegong pantheon and the printed *Three Hundred Icons* came the closest to being part of a broader, public imperial propaganda effort, along with a number of other mammoth court projects that translated and, more importantly, published religious collections such as the Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist Canons under the patronage of the emperor. In this case, as part of a project aimed primarily at the Qing Mongols, the organization of the vast Tibetan Buddhist pantheon presented certain challenges to Rölpe Dorjé, reflected in the evolving structure and membership of the Qianlong era pantheons. Berger points to a tension in these pantheon projects between imperially dictated orthodoxy and their clearly flexible membership. She notes:

[The inconsistency of the Qianlong era pantheons] demonstrates that Rolpay Dorje [Rölpe Dorjé] and his imperial patron did not for a moment consider that the pantheon of Buddhist deities was a static entity. Their broad-mindedness conforms to a more general Buddhist message that stresses the fluidity of identity and contingency of the self. But it also raises the question of how it might be possible to reconcile such open-ended amplitude with orthodoxy and orthopraxis. (...) Broad-mindedness, in Qianlong's view, therefore had to be balanced against orthodoxy and correctness.⁵⁴²

The ideology of imperial universalism works by aligning, if not reconciling, these tendencies and gains political utility from both. For the first the political function is more evident: the emperor establishes what is orthodox, and at Yonghegong the pantheon reflects the state-sponsored orthodoxy of the Gelug order as filtered through Rölpe Dorjé.⁵⁴³ The second tendency allowed for the expansion of the pantheon and the addition of figures with regional or sectarian significance, something that occurred throughout Buddhist history with the addition of local deities as the religion spread throughout Asia.⁵⁴⁴ For the multicultural Qing court this led to an extremely large pantheon, as it incorporated and promoted, for example, Guandi, the

⁵⁴² Berger, *Empire*, 88.

⁵⁴³ For a contemporary example of issues relating to orthodoxy and the shifting pantheon in Tibetan Buddhism, the recent Dorje Shugden controversy provides a fascinating case. See Georges Dreyfus, "The Shuk-Den Affair: Origins of a Controversy," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* v. 21.2 (1998): 227–270.

⁵⁴⁴ Luo notes this point in relation to the pantheons. Luo, 63.

Chinese God of War, and even another euhemerized Chinese deity, none other than “Bodhisattva Confucius,” both of whom were part of the Yonghegong pantheon.⁵⁴⁵ However, the most multicultural aspect of the Yonghegong pantheon may have been the particular deities chosen for the axial halls, all of whom would have been largely recognizable to a member of the Qing elite irrespective of their ethno-cultural background. None of the axial deities is unique to one Qing constituency; as we will see even such familiar Chinese deities as Budai or the Four Heavenly Kings have a multicultural dimension at Yonghegong, another example of the simultaneity of expression discussed by both Crossley and Berger as an ideological goal of the court.

Another pantheon designed for a context of public display and practice is found in the portrait series *The Qianlong Emperor as Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* to which I will return briefly here. (Fig. 68) Michael Heness has dated these portraits on stylistic grounds, and they range from around the mid 1750s to 1780s.⁵⁴⁶ Using the version in the collection of the Freer and Sackler Galleries as a representative for the series, we see the emperor is the focal point: he is the largest and most central icon in a collection of Tibetan Buddhist figures, and the naturalistic style used to represent his face makes it stand out from the rest of the composition, which is rendered in traditional, flat colors. The other figures shown are not identical in all of the portraits; however, the majority of these works display a consistent collection of 108 figures (a number significant in Buddhist numerology) and include representatives of the seven major types of deities, suggesting that they should be understood as at least symbolically comprehensive pantheons in which the

⁵⁴⁵ I am unaware of a surviving statue or painting of Bodhisattva Confucius at Yonghegong, but Lessing collected a liturgical text devoted to Bodhisattva Confucius at Yonghegong, and viewed a service to this deity at the home temple of a descendent of Confucius in October, 1914. Although the text was not dated, Lessing suggests that the ritual may have originated in the mid-eighteenth century. Ferdinand D. Lessing, “Bodhisattva Confucius,” in *Ritual and Symbol: Collected Essays on Lamaism and Chinese Symbolism*, Asian Folklore and Social Life, Monograph 91 (Taipei: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 91-94. Also noted by Berger. Berger, *Empire*, 218, n. 63.

⁵⁴⁶ Heness, “Bodhisattva Emperor, Part 1,” 5.

emperor has significant status.⁵⁴⁷ Furthermore, the portraits are representations of the emperor's legitimate place in a lineage of realized masters, a legacy bequeathed to him through his initiation by his guru, Rölpe Dorjé.

In asserting the Qianlong emperor's legitimacy in his politico-religious role to his Tibetan-Buddhist constituencies, the portraits were displayed at sites where the emperor's role as *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* was promoted: the temples at Chengde, the Potala and Tashilhunpo in Tibet, the old Qing capital at Shenyang, and at Yonghegong, where two copies are in the collection of the monastery.⁵⁴⁸ Henss notes a number of recorded incidents that demonstrate the ritual use of such portraits at the Potala, in which Tibetan dignitaries and monks prostrated to a *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portrait as if in the emperor's physical presence, a presence perhaps enhanced by the naturalistic style of the face.⁵⁴⁹

The emphasis placed in these portraits on the legitimacy of the emperor as *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* points to the underlying tension between imperial and monastic authority out of which the role emerged. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Qing emperors dealt with the potentially conflicting authority of Tibetan Buddhist tulku lineages by becoming one. An early representation of this role appeared in the 1711 *Lohan Sutra* printed by the court, which includes an image that Berger demonstrates to be the Kangxi emperor in his role as *Ākravartin*.⁵⁵⁰ Curiously, although as patron his presence is implicit, the emperor as *Ākravartin* or *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* does not appear in the *Three Hundred Icons* (although Rölpe Dorjé does), or in the other less public pantheons discussed above. After his initiation into formal

⁵⁴⁷ I suspect that the portraits with a consistent membership of figures and with a similar composition (listed in Henss' Appendix as numbers 1, 2, 6, 7, and 3 although it has slight compositional differences) are later than the others. Ibid., 16.

⁵⁴⁸ Henss lists ten versions. For three, their original sites are unknown, including the version in the Freer-Sackler collection. Ibid., 16.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 5-6. Berger discusses the issue of stylistic disparity in such works. Berger, *Empire*, 61-2.

⁵⁵⁰ Berger, *Empire*, 58.

Tibetan Buddhist practice in 1745, by the 1750s the emperor may have felt more secure in his personal practice and/or may have better appreciated the importance of his religious role enough to begin to commission the *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portraits.

In these portraits, the legitimacy of the emperor's status as realized master is conveyed in a number of ways. In Esoteric Buddhism as a whole and in Tibetan Buddhism in particular the role of the teacher is central, not only as the conveyor of the teachings and of spiritual power through initiation/empowerment rituals, but also as a link to the lineage of teachers stretching back to Śākyamuni or other buddhas.⁵⁵¹ In the context of guru yoga, the teacher *is* the Buddha, the first of the Three Jewels in which the practitioner takes refuge. This connection with gurus and lineage is demonstrated in the Qing pantheons through the precedence given to a lineage of great teachers, who come first in both of the reference pantheons (following only the trio of Śākyamuni, Maitreya and Mañjuśrī in the *Three Hundred Icons*). In the portraits the emperor is surrounded by a similar lineage of the great masters of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and the lineage continues above the emperor's head.

Directly above the emperor is Tsongkhapa, and above him Rölpe Dorjé, the second largest figure in the composition and identified by inscription as the “root guru” (S. *mūlaguru*; T. *rtsa-ba'i bla-ma*) of the emperor. Rölpe Dorjé acts as a link to the figures directly above him: eight mahāsiddhas and Sangye Yeshe (T. *sangs rgyas ye shes*, also *gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes*), a ninth century lay tantric master and disciple of Padmasambhava who brought the teachings of various mahāsiddhas to Tibet. The nine figures encircle Vajradhara (T. *rdo rje 'chang*), the primordial Buddha or Adi-Buddha of the Gelugpa and ultimate source for the tantras, who is often represented with the complete group of eighty-four mahāsiddhas. Their prominence here may relate to their status as highly realized but non-monastic masters, perhaps an important

⁵⁵¹ Blofeld, *Tantric*, 139.

distinction for the equally non-monastic emperor in asserting authority on the monastically-oriented Gelugpa tradition. A final sign of this imperial-monastic tension is seen in the emperor's robes. Unlike the image of the Kangxi emperor as *Ākavartin*, in which he is dressed in royal attire holding the Wheel of the Dharma, the Qianlong emperor is shown not only with the iconographic attributes of the *Mañjuḥoṣa-Ākavartin*, but is also wearing the robes of a lama and the hat of a tulku.

Notwithstanding their religious and political significance, the most outstanding feature of these portraits is the stark naturalism of the emperor's face in an otherwise traditionally rendered figure and setting. Although such a juxtaposition of styles was common in portraiture since the late Ming dynasty, given the emperor's predilections for layered meanings it may have had further significance in these works. Berger suggests understanding it as a sophisticated didactic device: the stylistic contrast of the setting *vis-à-vis* the "immediacy" of the face is a prod to the realization of the mediated nature of the medium; the juxtaposition of styles, of word and image, of multilingual and multicultural references, of sound and meaning, creates an unresolved dilemma that strives, *kōan*-like, to point toward "actualized experience."⁵⁵² Another dimension may be an attempt to represent the *Nirmāṇakāya* level of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī that the *Mañjuḥoṣa-Ākavartin* represents, his physical manifestation in the world. Yet another brings us back to the three spheres: the emperor's seemingly corporeal face underscores his physical presence, like the personal objects and calligraphy that make up the microcosm at Yonghegong.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵² Berger, *Empire*, 61-2.

⁵⁵³ A similar interest in capturing something of the physical presence of a teacher is seen in the tradition of footprint and handprint thangkas. See Kathryn S. Brown, *Eternal Presence: Handprints and Footprints in Buddhist Art* (Katonah, N.Y.: Katonah Museum of Art, 2004).

Conclusion

The three topics discussed in this chapter have demonstrated how tightly interwoven the realms of religion, politics and art were at the Qianlong court, and the central role that the universal emperor played in all of them. The *Canon of Iconometry* and its prefaces asserted to its Chinese readers the greater legitimacy and spiritual efficacy of “Indian-style” images such as those seen at Yonghegong over those in the “Chinese style”, simultaneously denigrating the Chinese Buddhist tradition, demonstrating the court’s superior scholarly mastery of the Buddhist textual corpus, and paternalistically saving Chinese Buddhists from themselves. To ensure fidelity to the “Indian style”, specialist artists were brought in from Nepal who provided not only stylistic *bona fides* but also links to the grandeur of the Mongol Empire. Finally, in determining the Qing Tibetan Buddhist pantheon, even in its varied forms, the court created and imposed orthodoxy, incorporated diverse deities with multicultural significance, developed pantheons for specific purposes (private and public) and provided yet another collection for the Qianlong emperor.

The centrality of the emperor in all of these projects, either implicit or explicit, and his legitimacy in asserting his authority in the Buddhist realm is represented in the portraits of the emperor as *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*, a role to which he was heir by birth, as a tulku, through initiation/empowerment, and from his own efforts. Whereas the message of imperial universalism is conveyed with a pithy directness in these individual portrait/pantheons, the same message is expounded upon in such multilayered, encyclopedic detail at Yonghegong that by the mid-twentieth century it may have been overlooked. In the final chapter, we return to Yonghegong to find that message again, interpreting representative works of the inner mandala with the three spheres model.

Chapter Eight: The Inner Mandala, Part 2

In this penultimate chapter, we return to Yonghegong and enter the inner mandala, analyzing certain prominent works of sculpture from the axial halls that best exemplify the Qianlong era theme of imperial universalism. Like the architecture of the outer mandala that progressed from a Chinese imperial architectural idiom to a more culturally diverse one, the inner mandala also moves from icons familiar in a Chinese Buddhist context to those with a more clearly Tibetan Buddhist character and displayed in an increasingly Tibetan visual atmosphere. However, also similar to the outer mandala, the Qianlong-era works discussed have a multivalent significance here interpreted with reference to the three spheres.

I will begin with works in the Gate of Harmony and Peace: *Budai Heshang* and the *Four Heavenly Kings*, standard figures in Chinese Buddhist temples, but which here can be demonstrated to have understated Tibetan associations. The next hall is the Palace of Harmony and Peace, enshrining a number of important works: the *Buddhas of the Three Ages*, made by the visiting Nepali sculptors introduced in Chapter Seven; the *Sixteen Arhats*, unmistakably Tibetan in their iconography; and finally a small but politically significant work the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*, sent as a gift to the Qianlong emperor from the Qing-supported ruler of Tibet. Moving next to the Hall of the Dharma Wheel I will begin with the most prominent work in the hall today, the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, an impressive work that was added to the site in the early twentieth century, and that may represent the complex religious and political environment in China during a time of great unrest. Before that immense work was added to the hall, the central platform displayed a much smaller icon, the *Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*, sent to the court by the same Tibetan ruler as the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*. The final work to be discussed is the most renowned image at Yonghegong, the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* in the Pavilion of

Infinite Happiness, a work carved from a single massive trunk of sandalwood sent as a gift to the Qianlong emperor by the Seventh Dalai Lama.

Along with the sculptures, this chapter will also touch on the most prominent works of the microcosm in the inner mandala, the Qianlong emperor's many calligraphic inscriptions. Although each of these works deserves an individual, detailed exegesis such as provided with the pailou inscriptions in Chapter Four, those inscriptions acted as a thematic prelude to the site as a whole, whereas a detailed textual analysis of each of the many later inscriptions might detract from the intended focus of the chapter. I will, however, provide a basic translation of the most prominent inscriptions, based on the glosses provided in Niu.⁵⁵⁴

The Gate of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghemmen* 雍和門)

A visitor familiar with the typical layout of Chinese Buddhist monasteries and their iconographic programs would enter the Gate of Harmony and Peace and see nothing surprising. The Gate of Harmony and Peace is also often referred to as the Hall of Heavenly Kings (*Tianwangdian* 天王殿), a hall in large Chinese Buddhist monasteries that houses sculptures of those deities, understood to be the guardians of the cardinal directions who protect the temple and the Dharma from malevolent forces. Massive statues of the Heavenly Kings are found at either side of the interior of the Gate of Harmony and Peace. In contrast to the fierce, warlike demeanor of the Heavenly Kings there is a much more welcoming figure seated on an altar facing south at the center of the hall. The rotund, smiling, gilded deity is known in Qing iconographies as Budai Heshang 布袋和尚 (“the Sack Monk”), but today is more often considered a manifestation of Maitreya and referred to as Maitreya Buddha (*Milefo* 彌勒佛) or

⁵⁵⁴ These are in Chapter 11 of Niu, *Yonghegong*, 443-512.

Maitreya Bodhisattva (*Milepusa* 彌勒菩薩).⁵⁵⁵ A wooden partition one bay wide fills the space behind him, displaying a four-character inscribed panel (*biane* 匾額) and column couplets with the Qianlong emperor's calligraphic inscriptions, a prominent association with the microcosm in this hall. These read:

Inscriptions

Horizontal Inscribed Panel Above Budai Heshang

Xian miao ming xin 現妙明心

“The Manifest Wonder of the Enlightened Mind.”⁵⁵⁶

Column Couplets Flanking Budai Heshang

Fajing jiaoguang liugen cheng hui 法鏡交光六根成慧日

“Abask in the light of the Dharma-mirror, the six senses themselves become the Wisdom-sun,”

Muni zhenjing shidi qi xiangyun 牟尼真淨十地起祥雲

“In the sage's pure mind the ten Bodhisattva stages arise like auspicious clouds” or “When the sage is true and pure, in the ten directions auspicious clouds arise.”⁵⁵⁷

On the other side of this partition is the Dharma-protector Skanda (*Weituo* 韋馱), armored like the Heavenly Kings but, like Budai, entirely gilded and with a more benign countenance. He grasps his ornate, imperial dragon-encrusted vajra staff and respectfully faces north towards the main hall of the temple, the Palace of Harmony and Peace, keeping watch over the main hall of the temple but also over the visitors as they return toward the entrance.

Lessing provides an iconographic study of the statues in this hall detailing the origins, development, textual history, iconography and ritual practice associated with these deities.⁵⁵⁸ I

⁵⁵⁵ As a deity that developed in China and has no Sanskrit name, I will refer to the more familiar Chinese form of the figure as Budai Heshang or simply Budai.

⁵⁵⁶ Translation based on Niu, *Yonghegong*, 455-6.

⁵⁵⁷ Translation based on Ibid., 456-7.

will emphasize only those aspects of the statues and hall interior that relate to my larger themes, and particularly to the multicultural elements that suggest imperial universalism. Because all of the deities in the Gate of Harmony and Peace are familiar figures in a Chinese Buddhist temple context, for a visitor to the site entering this hall the Tibetan Buddhist character of Yonghegong as a whole still remains largely hidden. However, there are subtle clues provided that suggest the complex mixture of imperial and Tibetan Buddhist symbolism that awaits the visitor.

*The Four Heavenly Kings (Si tianwang 四天王)*⁵⁵⁹

*Painted clay; probably eighteenth century, measurements unavailable.*⁵⁶⁰

[SE] *Vaiśravaṇa*, Heavenly King of the North (Fig. 21)
(C. *Duowentian* 多聞天, “The All-Hearing”;
T. *rnam thos sras*; “Son of He who has Heard Many Things”)

[NE] *Virupākṣa*, Heavenly King of the West (Fig. 22)
(C. *Guangmutian* 廣目天, “The All-Seeing”;
T. *spyān mi bzang*; “Ugly Eyes”)

[SW] *Virūdhaka*, Heavenly King of the South (Fig. 23)
(C. *Zengzhangtian* 增長天, “The Expander”;
T. *'phags skyes po*, “Noble Birth”)

[NW] *Dhṛtarāṣṭra*, Heavenly King of the East (Fig. 24)
(C. *Chiguotian* 持國天, “The Maintainer of the State”;
T. *yul 'khor srung* “The Defender of the Area”)

⁵⁵⁸ Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 15-55.

⁵⁵⁹ Also “Four Great Kings” (S. *Catur Mahārāja*; T. *rgyal chen sde bzhi*). *Devarāja* is a more direct translation of *tianwang*, but the four are also often referred to as *lokapāla*, or “World Guardians” (T. *'jig rten skyong ba*). Tibetan Romanization and translation from the Tibetan from Rigpa Shedra website, <http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Four_Great_Kings>.

⁵⁶⁰ A court record dated Qianlong 15, 6/19 (July 22, 1750) notes the production of wood core, painted clay statues of “Skanda Heavenly King two icons 韋馱天王二尊” with a height of 6.6 *chi* (roughly 2 meters) for the Hall of Heavenly Kings. Although somewhat ambiguous, this may or may not refer to one or more of the Heavenly Kings currently on display, but certainly not the wooden Skanda. See Lai and Chang, “Yung-ho Temple,” 141; also Zhongguo di yi lishi dang'an guan 中國第一歷史檔案館 (First Historical Archives of China), and Yonghegong Guanlichu 雍和宮管理處 (Yonghegong Administration Department), *Qing dai Yonghegong dang'an shiliao* 清代雍和宮檔案史料 (“Archival Historical Materials on Yonghegong in the Qing Dynasty”), vol. 5 (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu sheying yishu chubanshe, 2004), 255-261.

The Four Heavenly Kings are fierce looking guardian deities that often appear in the form of large sculptures placed in a dedicated gate hall in large monasteries all over East Asia.⁵⁶¹ They are popular deities throughout the Buddhist world, and are understood to be the protectors of our world and guardians of the four cardinal directions. The kings reside in grand palaces on the slopes of Mt. Meru, and each king is the general of a huge army made up of various beings. Originally tasked with defending the realm of the gods from the depredations of the demonic *asuras* who live at the base of the mountain, the kings' duties expanded to include the protection of the world, the Dharma and its followers. The benefits of their worship are probably best known through the *Golden Light Sutra* (S. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra*; C. *Jin'guangmingjing* 金光明經; T. *gser 'od dam pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po'i mdo*).⁵⁶² Although the kings had wide appeal, the sutra emphasizes their benefits to rulers who properly venerate the kings and the sutra, a fact probably not lost on the Qianlong emperor.

At Yonghegong the kings appear in pairs facing inward at either side of the interior of the Gate of Harmony and Peace in wide bays that are two-thirds of the hall's length. They are massive clay statues built on wooden armatures, and their bulky forms fill the side bays. All four kings sit on low, painted wooden, table-like thrones that in turn rest on individual stone platforms. The stone platforms extend in front to support the small figures on which the kings plant their feet. Although the kings are dimly lit, their illumination coming primarily from the small windows in the side bays of the south-facing façade, they are hard to miss. They loom

⁵⁶¹ In many major East Asian temples, but not at Yonghegong, the Heavenly Kings are preceded by two other fierce gate guardians (S. *dvārapāla*), identified variably as Benevolent Kings (*renwang* 仁王) or Vajra Bearers (S. *vajradhāra*, C. *jingangshen* 金剛神, *jingangshou* 金剛手, *jinganglishi* 金剛力士), but widely known in China as “the Two Generals Heng and Ha” 哼哈二將. This popular identification is based on the sixteenth-century mythological novel *The Investiture of the Gods* (*Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義).

⁵⁶² Noted in Marsha Weidner, “A Vaishnavana Thangka from the Ming Dynasty,” *Oriental Art* 39, no. 8 (2008): 92. For a recent translation into English, see Losang Dawa, trans., *The King of Glorious Sutras Called the Exalted Sublime Golden Light*, Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Teaching, December 12, 2006, <<http://www.fpmt.org/images/stories/teachers/zopa/advice/pdf/sutragoldenlight0207ltr.pdf>>.

over the visitor with their impressive bulk, but beyond sheer size, their visual impact is magnified by their dramatic poses, fierce facial expressions and the brightly painted and gilded crowns and armor that each wears. The four statues are works of skillful artistic accomplishment and fascinating and creative variety.

Statues of Buddhist guardian figures require the sculptor to capture an almost paradoxical combination of stability and dynamism. In the Yonghegong Heavenly Kings, a sense of strength and solidity is conveyed through the size and bulk of the figures, their slightly exaggerated physical proportions, and their commanding postures and gestures; dynamic energy is expressed by the sinuous appearance of the floating ribbons and the undulating sleeves and leggings, sculpted as if frozen in the midst of wind-blown motion. A further sense of restrained power is seen in the legs of the kings, hanging over the edge of the throne in a modified “posture of relaxation” (S. *lalitāsana*), but with their feet pressing down and restraining small, impish figures.⁵⁶³ Although the dim lighting in the side bays can make viewing the statues difficult, the deep shading it creates accentuates the dramatic character of these figures. The size and demeanor of such statues symbolizes their power, but the intimidating nature of the images may further act to encourage good behavior from those entering the temple grounds.

The Understated Tibetan Character of the Yonghegong Heavenly Kings

Although the Heavenly Kings at Yonghegong have many similarities with their counterparts at Chinese Buddhist sites, perhaps not surprisingly for a Tibetan Buddhist

⁵⁶³ These figures are variously identified at Yonghegong, usually as demons or enemies of the Dharma. Niu lists a few other traditions: they are the servants of the four kings who oversee mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon, wind, rain, thunder and lightning; they represent the eight classes of supernatural beings (*babuzhong* 八部眾, namely *deva*, *nāga*, *yakṣa*, *gandharva*, *asura*, *garuḍa*, *kinnara*, *mahoraga*); and a folk tradition that the figures represent the Eight Vulgar Desires (*bazhong sunian* 八種俗念, namely greed, anger, infatuation, love, killing, stealing, lewdness, and arrogance). Niu, *Yonghegong*, 299.

monastery sponsored by the Qing court they also reflect some elements of both imperial and Tibetan Buddhist iconography. I will point to a few of these characteristics shared by the Yonghegong kings, and then detail a few for the individual statues.

In keeping with their duties, the kings are portrayed as both majestic rulers and powerful warriors, a status indicated by their elaborate, archaistic armor and resplendent crowns. In the case of the Yonghegong kings, the crowns are very ornate, gilded versions of Buddhist ritual crowns of the Five Dhyani Buddhas (*pilumao* 毗盧帽; T. *dbu rgyan*). These crowns are frequently used in Tibetan Buddhist ritual and iconography, and have five panels, each of which displays one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas, as seen on the Yonghegong kings, or written characters that symbolize the five buddhas. For an eighteenth century visitor, the crowns worn by the four kings at Yonghegong would perhaps have given them a Tibetan character.⁵⁶⁴ In the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, a five-lobed crown was not unknown in a Chinese Buddhist context,⁵⁶⁵ but more typically, Chinese versions of the Heavenly Kings portray them in complex, jewel-bedecked crowns or in helmets.⁵⁶⁶

Another Tibetan characteristic that is not immediately apparent has to do with their placement. In examining each king and his directional association, it is clear that the kings are

⁵⁶⁴ In the twentieth century, the Five Dhyani Buddha crown has become a much more familiar feature in a Chinese Buddhist context, appearing frequently on the four Heavenly Kings, a prominent example being the Heavenly Kings at the massive Chung Tai Monastery in Taiwan, completed in 2001. "Hall of the Four Heavenly Kings," Chung Tai Chan Monastery, 2009, <<http://www.ctworld.org/english-96/html/a5Hall%20of%20the%20Four%20Heavenly%20Kings.htm>>. Also, the crown is worn by the fictional monk Tang Sanzang in many modern film and television versions of *Journey to the West*.

⁵⁶⁵ For example, the Ming dynasty Heavenly Kings sculptures at Shuanglin Monastery 雙林寺 wear very ornate, openwork five-lobed crowns, but the crowns lack specific Dhyani Buddha imagery. Shanxi sheng wenwu ju 山西省文物局, *Shuanglinsi Caisu* 雙林寺彩塑 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1998) 13-20.

⁵⁶⁶ In some cases a set of four kings can vary in the headwear worn among its members, some wearing crowns and some helmets, even in the various Qing iconographies. For example, in the *Three Hundred Icons*, the kings of the North and West wear five-lobed crowns (identical to those worn by bodhisattvas elsewhere in the text), but the other kings wear helmets. Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje, *Lalitavajra's Manual*, 252-55. Similar variation is found in the other iconographies. This variation may be an opportunity for an artist to afford some measure of individual character to each king, as is also done with facial expressions, hair and beards, apparent age and of course variation in stance, gesture and dress. A creative alteration in decorative details and colors is seen most particularly in the armor worn by the Yonghegong kings.

not placed with reference to the actual cardinal direction over which they rule, different from their placement in a Chinese Buddhist monastery. For example, as noted in the list that began this section on the kings, the King of the North is in the southeast corner of the hall and the King of the East is in the northwest. Niu connects this with Tibetan favoring of the right side.⁵⁶⁷ Vaiśravaṇa, Heavenly King of the North, is often considered the leader of the Four Kings; therefore, he is given pride of place first on the right despite this being to the east.

Turning now to the individual statues, the kings can usually be identified individually by differing iconographic attributes such as the victory banner, the sword, the snake and the *pipa* 琵琶, a stringed instrument similar to the lute.⁵⁶⁸ However in many cases specific identification of the individual kings can be complicated by the iconographic variation in attributes and skin tone that exists throughout Asia and even within China.⁵⁶⁹ At Yonghegong, with the exception of Virupākṣa, the designer avoided the more elastic iconography of the Chinese Buddhist tradition and followed the more standardized Tibetan iconography found in the Qing court Tibetan Buddhist pantheons.

The Yonghegong Vaiśravaṇa's Tibetan characteristics include his yellow skin tone and the jewel-spitting mongoose that he holds in his left hand on his lap. The mongoose symbolizes the defeat of the serpent-like *nāgas*, and the spitting of jewels represents Vaiśravaṇa's command of the *nāgas*' untold riches and his generosity.⁵⁷⁰ In his proper right hand he holds the shaft of a victory banner (S. *dhvaja*) that symbolizes the victory of the Dharma and overcoming

⁵⁶⁷ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 297.

⁵⁶⁸ Niu, associates these attributes with four of the Buddhist Five Elements (lute: earth, snake: water, sword: fire, victory banner: wind), and notes a folk tradition that connects these attributes with control of the wind and rain. *Ibid.*, 299.

⁵⁶⁹ As part of his study of the Four Heavenly Kings, Lessing provides a chart that demonstrates the variation of attributes within the Chinese cultural heartland. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 38-51.

⁵⁷⁰ Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 161. Due to this, Vaiśravaṇa is also classified among the Wealth Deities. Martin Willson and Martin Brauen, *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism: The Zürich Paintings of the Icons Worthwhile to See: Bris Sku Mthoñ Ba Don Ldan* (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 300-13.

hindrances.⁵⁷¹ In Chinese Buddhist iconography the victory banner is also held by Vaiśravaṇa,⁵⁷² but in place of the mongoose he typically holds a small reliquary shaped like a stupa or pagoda.⁵⁷³

Virupākṣa, Heavenly King of the West, is located to the north of Vaiśravaṇa in the east-side bay of the hall. His skin tone has a reddish tint, consistent with the Tibetan system. As king of the *nāgas*, his proper right hand grasps a small, green snake and holds it on his lap, mirroring Vaiśravaṇa's mongoose, and he holds up a red, spherical gem at shoulder height between the thumb and index finger of his left hand. Curiously, this is the one iconographical feature among the four kings that seems to accord more with the Chinese system than the Tibetan. In the Qing Tibetan iconographies, Virupākṣa holds a snake in one hand but a small pagoda-like reliquary in the other, a feature more common to Vaiśravaṇa in the Chinese system.

For the other two kings, their iconography is relatively similar in Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist contexts, apart from some variation in skin color. The Yonghegong kings remain faithful to the Tibetan system. Virūḍhaka, king of the south, has a sword and a dark blue skin tone. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, king of the east, is one of the most immediately recognizable of the four fierce warrior-kings due to his rather incongruous attribute, a *pipa*, that he is often shown in the act of strumming. The pipa symbolizes his status as king of the *gandharvas*, a class of heavenly beings known for musical abilities. His skin tone is white, which accords with the Tibetan iconography.

⁵⁷¹ Loden Sherap Dag'yab, *Buddhist Symbols in Tibetan Culture* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995) 27-9. The victory banner is often mistaken for a parasol. Both banner and parasol are included in the "Eight Auspicious Symbols of Buddhism" that appear as frequent decorative motifs in Chinese and Tibetan decorative arts.

⁵⁷² But somewhat inconsistently, as Lessing demonstrates in a chart. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung*, 42.

⁵⁷³ For an example, see the Vaiśravaṇa in the Baoning Monastery Water-Land Ritual paintings, Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物馆编 (Shanxi Provincial Museum), *Bao Ning Si Ming Dai Shui Lu Hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫 ("Baoning Monastery Water-Land Ritual Paintings of the Ming Dynasty") (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), Pl. 54.

Budai Heshang 布袋和尚 (“The Sack Monk”)

Gilded wood; probably eighteenth century, measurements unavailable. (Fig. 20)

The welcoming image of Budai Heshang (Fig. 20) is the central icon of the Gate of Harmony and Peace. Despite his fame and Chinese origins, like the Heavenly Kings the Yonghegong Budai and his immediate surroundings have demonstrably imperial, Chinese Buddhist and Tibetan Buddhist significance. Budai’s importance is emphasized by the large, imperial calligraphic inscriptions that appear in the horizontal board above him and in the vertical column couplets on the flanking pillars, discussed below. To either side of Budai are two conical Tibetan Buddhist Longevity Towers (*yanshouta* 延壽塔): nine-storied, sandalwood towers that display small pressed clay images (T. *tsa tsa*) of the longevity deities Amitayus Buddha and White Tara.⁵⁷⁴ In front of Budai’s altar is an offering table that supports a standard set of the five altar fittings (*wugong* 五供) in enamelware.⁵⁷⁵

The statue of Budai is gilded wood, and sits on an ornately carved wooden luohan bed (*luohan chuang* 羅漢床) on top of a stone platform. He is in the posture of royal ease (S. *Rājālīlāsana*), with his proper right arm resting on his raised right knee, his hand lightly grasping a rosary. His left arm rests on his left leg, which lies on the throne, the sole of his foot turned up in front of his large belly. His left hand grasps a corner of his cassock. The cassock, painted red, barely covers the figure’s arms and legs. The rest of the figure’s body is brightly gilded. The proportions of the figure are somewhat exaggerated, emphasizing the key elements of his iconography: his massive belly, and his exuberant smile. Budai appears at a number of Qing court sponsored Tibetan Buddhist temples that, like Yonghegong, follow the general layout and

⁵⁷⁴ *Palace of Harmony* counts a total of 274 ten-centimeter figures. Du, *Palace of Harmony*, 26.

⁵⁷⁵ These include an incense burner at the center, most often flanked first by a pair of candlesticks, then a pair of vases further out, although sometimes the vases and candlesticks are reversed.

appearance of a Chinese Buddhist temple.⁵⁷⁶ His throne is painted red, and the tops of the rear and side panels are carved in a complex pattern of clouds and seven intertwining dragons, subtle reminders of the imperial associations of the temple.

Budai/Hvashang in China and Tibet

Budai is probably the most widely recognized member of the Chinese Buddhist pantheon. He is often popularly called the Laughing Buddha (*Xiaofu* 笑佛). Some Chinese Buddhist traditions identify the figure as a human manifestation of Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future, and refer to him as Maitreya Bodhisattva (*Milepusa* 彌勒菩薩) or even Maitreya Buddha (*Milefo* 彌勒佛), although he is not identified as such in the Qing pantheons. Budai's placement as the central welcoming deity in the first hall is a standard feature at Chinese Buddhist temples. An overview of his textual history and worship of this popular deity is outside of the scope of this study; what I will emphasize is his links to the mesocosm at Yonghegong, and the curious role he plays at the intersection between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism.

Budai is in many ways a liminal figure: between man and god, between base clown and enlightened master, between outer, secular space and the inner sacred space of the monastery interior, to name a few. Furthermore, Budai can be demonstrated to sit at the doorway between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism, and along with the arhats with which he is often associated in both regions, Budai brings up a number of connections and questions that arise in a multicultural site like Yonghegong. I will argue below that in Tibetan Buddhism, Budai in some respects acts as a proxy for China, reflecting the historical connections and tensions between these cultural and political spheres.

⁵⁷⁶ An almost identical Budai and throne produced by Qing court artists are in the Hall of Heavenly Kings at Pulesi 普樂寺 in Chengde, constructed in 1766.

This relationship is demonstrated in a Tibetan figure known in Tibetan as Hvashang (T. *hwa shang*), a name clearly derived from the Chinese term *heshang* 和尚 (“Buddhist monk”). His iconography is similar to Budai Heshang, and both names (Budai Heshang in Chinese and Hvashang in Tibetan) are used for the same figure in the Qing pantheon *In Praise of the Sacred Images*.⁵⁷⁷ He has a large belly and corpulent appearance and displays a relaxed and usually cheerful demeanor. He, like many Chinese images of Budai, also appears with one or more playful children. Although Budai has an independent existence as a deity in China, Hvashang in Tibet appears almost exclusively as one of the attendants of the Sixteen Arhats, and was probably the last addition to the group by the late fourteenth century.⁵⁷⁸ Both Hvashang, the eighteenth of the group, and Dharmatala, the seventeenth, are not actually arhats, but are considered lay devotees (S. *upāsaka*) who are assistants to the arhats, and sometimes described as “patrons.” Unlike images of Budai in China, in which he is often the central figure, Hvashang only appears with the Sixteen Arhats, Dharmatala, and the Four Heavenly Kings in Tibetan Buddhist art. His appearance in a hall with the kings might make his solo appearance less incongruous to an eighteenth-century person more familiar with a Tibetan Buddhist context, such as the elite Mongols and Mongol monks who came to Yonghegong.

In Chinese images, Budai is clearly a monk but in Tibetan images Hvashang appears in a more ambiguous guise. His robes appear to be the sumptuous robes of a wealthy layman and he often wears jewelry, but he is also typically shaven-headed like the other arhats. His iconography in Tibet is quite consistent, like that of the other arhats discussed in relation to the sculptures in the Palace of Harmony and Peace below. Beyond his body type, exposed chest and belly, and his jocular disposition, he is also typically shown with a dark complexion, seated

⁵⁷⁷ See *In Praise of the Sacred Images*, Fig. 289. Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, 297. Walravens, *Buddhist Literature*, 245.

⁵⁷⁸ Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 102.

casually, with one hand holding a rosary, and the other with an offering, usually of fruit. In many cases, he is explicitly identified as a Chinese figure, described as the Chinese patron of the Sixteen Arhats.⁵⁷⁹

Hvashang is also linked to a figure in Tibetan Buddhist history called Hvashang Mahāyāna (T. *hwa shang ma hā yā na*), probably adapted from the Chinese for “Mahāyāna Monk,” although in Tibet it is taken as his name. In traditional accounts, this Hvashang represented Chinese Buddhism of the Chan school in a famous, high-stakes debate or series of debates in Tibet around the years 792-794.⁵⁸⁰ The debate pitted Hvashang against Kamalaśīla, the renowned Indian Buddhist master, and the winner would propagate his teachings in Tibet, while the loser would be banned. Usually portrayed as a debate between the “sudden enlightenment” ideal of Chan and the “gradual enlightenment” ideal of Indian schools of Buddhism, the contest also has a clear nationalistic undercurrent.⁵⁸¹ In Tibetan sources, Kamalaśīla’s side won the debate, and Hvashang’s side was banished. Dejected, Hvashang and a number of his disciples subsequently committed suicide, and some even hired Chinese assassins to kill Kamalaśīla, further evidence of their lack of credibility as pacifist Buddhist monks. In Chinese versions, Hvashang’s side wins, but he and some followers commit suicide for the rather unconvincing reason that he “...was so upset by the degeneration of dharma in Tibet.”⁵⁸²

Whoever won the debate, or if it even occurred, in Tibet the story of the debate is unequivocally one of the defeat of Chinese Buddhism and China by extension. Chinese

⁵⁷⁹ Olschak, *Mystic*, 68.

⁵⁸⁰ Powers provides a brief overview of the legendary debate. John Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2007) 149-152. A more in-depth study of the philosophical issues in the debate is Joseph F. Roccasalvo, “The Debate at bSam yas: A Study in Religious Contrast and Correspondence,” *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct., 1980): 505-520. The most complete study is Paul Demieville, *Le Concile de Lhasa: Une Controverse sur le Quietisme entre Bouddhistes de l’Inde et de la Chine au VIIIe Siecle de l’Ere Chretienne* (Paris: Bibliotheque de l’Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1952).

⁵⁸¹ Powers notes the political undercurrent in accounts of the debate. Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, 152.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 152.

Buddhism, particularly of the “sudden enlightenment” variety, was subsequently considered heterodox. This is considered an important turning point in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. Henceforth, Tibetan Buddhism would turn to India as its source for orthodoxy. The most clear and polemical expression of the rejection of the Chinese Buddhism of Hvashang is found in sacred dances called *cham* (discussed in Chapter Five) performed during New Year celebrations in front of the Gate of Harmony and Peace. The dances traditionally include a performance based on the famous debate between Kamalaśīla and Hvashang. In it, Hvashang is represented as chubby with a round, smiling face. (Fig. 109) He is a comical figure, who entertains the audience with slapstick antics, and is mocked not only by the audience but also by the performers playing his own disciples.⁵⁸³ Sometimes the disciples are represented as children, more closely associating this Hvashang with the iconography of the Hvashang with the Sixteen Arhats and with Budai.⁵⁸⁴ I suspect that the gradual conflation of what were probably two separate figures originally, Budai/Hvashang and Hvashang Mahāyāna evolved due to the similarity in names, and the easy adapting of the somewhat comical appearance of Budai/Hvashang to a character that plays a comical role in a ritual performance.

To sum up this discussion of the complex intersection between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism that he represents, let me review the three forms of Budai that I have noted, and relate them directly to Yonghegong. We have three figures with similar iconography, but with some distinctions as well. The first is the Chinese figure Budai Heshang, the Sack Monk, with his early Chan associations and later connections in popular religion with good fortune and Maitreya. The second is the Tibetan figure Hvashang who is an aide to the sixteen arhats, but whose

⁵⁸³ Ibid., 227.

⁵⁸⁴ Berger and Bartholomew, *Mongolia*, 64-5. Roccasalvo, “Debate,” 505. In some dances an almost identical figure is identified as King Kashin (Kashin Khan) of Kashmir and his sons. A similar, comical theatrical figure whose appearance seems to be based on Budai is the “Big Head Buddha” (C. *datoufo* 大頭佛) who appears in Lion Dance performances.

iconography seems to overlap with that of Budai. That these two were closely identified at the Qing court, if not identical figures, is demonstrated in *In Praise of the Sacred Images*. The third is Hvashang Mahāyāna as represented in the *cham* dance. All three of these figures appear at Yonghegong. The first is of course Budai in his typical welcoming position in the Gate of Harmony and Peace. The second, Hvashang, appears with the arhats in the Palace of Harmony and Peace, the main hall of Yonghegong, discussed below. The third, Hvashang Mahāyāna, appears at Yonghegong during the three-day New Year's *cham* dance discussed in Chapter Five. One section, popularly called "Maitreya Dance" (*tiao Mile* 跳彌勒) includes the comical version of Hvashang Mahāyāna, but it appears that his role is greatly diminished, even whitewashed. He and his six followers/ children, identified in contemporary descriptions as "Maitreya" following the Chinese interpretation, simply appear and sit at the front of the dancing platform, watch the ritual dances being performed and aid in the ritual demon-expulsion. Perhaps not surprisingly, the polemical presentation of Hvashang Mahāyāna as the comical, benighted representative of Chinese Buddhism as a heterodox tradition is downplayed in the contemporary performance of the ritual dance in China.

Palace of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghegong* 雍和宮)

Entering the main ceremonial hall of Yonghegong the visitor is plunged into an exuberantly decorated and brightly colored setting even more dramatic than that found in the Gate of Harmony and Peace. Embroidered silk hangings descend from the painted, coffered ceiling, and gilded and colored deities fill the interior. In this section I will introduce two sets and one individual icon housed in this hall. The first set is the *Buddhas of the Three Ages*, three large gilt bronze statues that are the main icons of the hall. They are the products of the Nepali artists

discussed in the previous chapter. The central buddha, Śākyamuni, is enthroned emperor-like beneath a recessed caisson ceiling well (*zaojing* 藻井) that, like its counterpart in the Hall of Supreme Harmony, drips with gilded dragon carvings. In the bays to either side of Śākyamuni are the other two buddhas of the set, Dīpaṃkara and Maitreya, identical to Śākyamuni but for their differing mudrās. Behind them are elaborately carved and gilded back-supports in the form of the “Six-ornament Throne of Enlightenment”, and in front are altar tables covered with offerings and ornate altar fittings.⁵⁸⁵

The second set is found to either side of the hall: rows of smaller statues of the Sixteen Arhats, disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha and protectors of the Dharma, who sit with colorful robes and dignified bearing, nine to a side and facing in towards the three buddhas. Similar to the Gate of Harmony and Peace, a visitor to this hall finds nothing jarringly different from a Chinese Buddhist temple apart from the Tibetan-style silk hangings and Tibetan script in the architectural decorations. As Niu notes, this hall is similar in function to the main hall in a Chinese Buddhist temple, known as the “Mahāvīra Hall” or “Precious Hall of the Great Hero” (*Daxiong baodian* 大雄寶殿), *Mahāvīra* (“great hero”) being an epithet for Śākyamuni.⁵⁸⁶ However, like the understated Tibetan elements in the Gate of Harmony and Peace, closer examination reveals evidence of a Tibetan Buddhist subtext in this hall as well, one that in the case of the *Sixteen Arhats* seems to have been long forgotten at the site. The final work I will discuss is a small but historically significant statue that was originally kept in this hall, but in 2005 was displayed in a special exhibit in the Panchen Tower. Unlike the culturally more ambiguous buddhas and arhats, this is an icon with an unequivocal Himalayan pedigree, the

⁵⁸⁵ Although I have been unable to confirm the medium, the back-supports appear to be gilded wood. They are extremely similar to the “Six-ornament Throne of Enlightenment” back supports seen behind the main icons at Puningsi, Pulesi, Shuxiangsi and Anyuanmiao at Chengde, suggesting that they were not made by the Nepalis but by other court artisans.

⁵⁸⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 301.

Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara (Yonghegong Luojishuolifo 雍和宮羅吉碩哩佛). It was sent as a gift to the Qianlong emperor from the local ruler of Tibet, and its significance in the sphere of political legitimation continues today. Along with the macrocosmic and mesocosmic themes provided by the icons, the Qianlong emperor's personal presence at the site is again recalled by his prominently displayed calligraphic inscriptions, in this case on the central interior columns of the hall that frame each of the *Buddhas of the Three Generations*.

Inscriptions

The inner structure of the Palace of Harmony and Peace is somewhat unusual, with each of the three central icons enclosed in its own bay, a space defined by two closely spaced columns to either side of each altar. The extra structural support provided by the placement of the columns allows for a large open area in front of the icons for ritual gatherings, as it probably did for audiences with the prince in the site's earlier incarnation. The double columns on each side of the buddhas also provide a space for column couplet inscriptions. In photographs the association of column couplets and buddhas is slightly confusing because the double columns of the central bay are shared and the couplets overlap, but the couplets for Śākyamuni Buddha are clearly the two on the front, central columns, and the couplets for the other buddhas flank each on the rear sets of columns. As found throughout the site, two of the couplet pairs are by the Qianlong emperor; however the pair associated with *Maitreya Buddha* on the east is by the twentieth-century painter, calligrapher, scholar and descendent of the Qing imperial family, Qi Gong (also Qigong, 启功 1912-2005), whose calligraphy also appears in the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness at Yonghegong, as well as at other sites in China. His couplets may have been added

to replace missing or damaged originals. The following translations are based on the glosses in Niu.⁵⁸⁷

Center: Couplet on Front Columns, Flanking Śākyamuni:⁵⁸⁸

(East) *Jieyin qunsheng yang sanqian dahua* 接引群生揚三千大化

“Receiving and guiding all sentient beings, [he] spreads the great transformation [of his teachings] in the three-thousand worlds;”

(West) *Yuantong zizai zhu buerfamen* 圓通自在住不二灑[法]門

“Perfect realization and self-abiding reside in the non-dual dharma-gate.”⁵⁸⁹

East: Couplet on Rear Columns, Flanking Maitreya Buddha, by Qi Gong⁵⁹⁰

(East) *Chao ershiqi chong tian yi shang* 超二十七重天以上

“Passing beyond the twenty-seven heavens;”

(West) *Du bai qian wan yi jie zhi zhong* 度百千萬億劫之中

“Saving numberless beings in kalpas beyond reckoning.”⁵⁹¹

West: Couplet on Rear Columns, Flanking Dīpaṃkara:⁵⁹²

(East) *Fajie shi nengren fu zi wanyou* 法界示能仁福資萬有

“[When the] *Dharmadhātu* manifests Śākyā, blessings and material wealth are universal;”

(West) *Jingyin zhen guanghui miao zheng sanmo* 淨因臻廣慧妙證三摩

“When the causes are purified, *vipulaprajñā* (vast wisdom) is achieved and the profound realization of *samādhi*.”⁵⁹³

⁵⁸⁷ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 457-462.

⁵⁸⁸ These are the only couplets recorded for this hall in *Guochao gongshi*, which dates to 1759-60 (Qianlong 24). *Guochao gongshi*, 657-339.

⁵⁸⁹ Translation based on Niu, *Yonghegong*, 457-9.

⁵⁹⁰ These couplet plaques are seen in the Hall of the Dharma Wheel, on the southernmost set of central columns in a photograph dated 1932 in the Lessing archives at Naritasan. Therefore, the fact that they are eight-character couplets and contrast with the nine-character couplets by the Qianlong emperor, may not have been Qi Gong’s intention.

⁵⁹¹ Translation based on Ibid., 461-2.

⁵⁹² Since this couplet is not recorded in *Guochaogongshi*, 657-339, it may post-date the central couplet, or may have been moved here from another location.

⁵⁹³ Translation based on Niu, *Yonghegong*, 459-61.

*Buddhas of the Three Ages (Sanshifo 三世佛, T. dus gsum sangs rgyas)*⁵⁹⁴

1745. Bronze, painted and gilded; each 2.4 m.

[East] *Maitreya Buddha* (Milefo 彌勒佛; T. *byams pa*) (Fig. 28)

[Center] *Śākyamuni Buddha* (Shijiamunifo 釋迦牟尼佛; T. *sangs rgyas sha kya thub pa*) (Fig. 29)

Flanking Śākyamuni

(West) *Ānanda* (A'nan 阿難; T. *kun dga' bo*). Bronze, painted and gilded; 1.7 meters.

(East) *Mahākāśyapa* (Mohejiaye 摩訶迦葉; T. *'od srung chen po*). Bronze, painted and gilded; 1.7 meters.

[West] *Dīpaṃkara Buddha* (Randengfo 燃燈佛; T. *mar me mzad*) (Fig. 30)

The “Buddhas of the Three Ages” (*Sanshifo* 三世佛, also “Three Times” or “Three Generations”) was a popular subject Chinese Buddhist art, and particularly prevalent in the Buddhist art of the Qing court, appearing as the central images at a number of imperial Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, and in paintings and silk tapestries made by the court.⁵⁹⁵ The “Three

⁵⁹⁴ The Nepali sculptors were returned to the Zaobanchu from the Yonghegong project in February of 1745 (The first month of Qianlong 10), so I am dating the statues based on the assumption that they were complete at that time. Luo, 595. Based on a record in the Yuezhidang, Lai and Chang date their production to 1746 (Qianlong 11). Lai and Chang, “Yung-ho Temple,” 139.

⁵⁹⁵ They appear as the main icons at two of the Qing court Tibetan Buddhist temples at Chengde: Purensi 溥仁寺 (1713) and Puningsi 普寧寺 (1755). A set from the Forbidden City similar in style and iconography is seen in Palace Museum, *Qingdong Zangchuan*, 106, also noted by Berger. Berger has covered the painted and silk tapestry versions. Berger, *Empire*, 41-3 and Berger, *Latter Days*, 115-16 and Patricia Berger, “Buddhas of the Three Generations,” in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 237-38. They include a painted version of the subject by Qing court artist Ding Guanpeng 丁觀鵬 (act. 1708-71) in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (Berger, *Empire*, pl. 5; 41-3) that Berger suggests may have been the basis for the *kesi* 緯絲 silk tapestry versions, examples of which she notes, including the pieces in the Asian Art Museum, one in the Potala, one in the Beijing Palace Museum, one in the Chester Beatty Collection, Dublin, and examples at the Empress Eugénie’s “Chinese Museum” at the Palace of Fontainebleau in France (Berger’s source cites two, but there are three, looted from the Yuanmingyuan, that are oddly glued to the ceiling with a chandelier hanging beneath them.) Another a very large version hangs in the Ten-thousand Dharmas Return as One Hall (*Wanfaguiyidian* 萬法

Ages” refer to the past, present and future. The past is represented by Dīpaṃkara Buddha, who was the first of the series of buddhas of our world that preceded Śākyamuni Buddha;⁵⁹⁶

Śākyamuni represents the present age, with Maitreya Buddha representing the future.⁵⁹⁷

Although the three buddha statues at Yonghegong are nearly identical, they can be distinguished by their iconography. Śākyamuni at the center, attended by Ānanda and Mahākāśyapa, touches the earth in the *bhūmiśparśhamudrā*. The other buddhas perform two versions of the *dharma cakramudrā*: Dīpaṃkara, on the west, with the left hand palm up and Maitreya, on the east, with the left hand palm facing inwards.⁵⁹⁸ In the macrocosm of Yonghegong, they can be understood to represent the centrality of buddhas in the Buddhist pantheon, and as a group they emphasize the cyclical inevitability of the Dharma in Buddhist cosmology.⁵⁹⁹

As icons in active worship today, the three are always covered with robes and often have white offering scarves (T. *kha btags*) in their hands or around their shoulders. However, formal analysis of the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* is possible from published images of the statues

歸一殿) at the Putuozongchengmiao 普陀宗乘之廟 in Chengde. Finally, most relevant to this study, one was formerly hung in the Hall of the Dharma Wheel behind the platform that now supports the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*. See Fig. 113.

⁵⁹⁶ Like Vaiśravaṇa for the Four Heavenly Kings or Piṇḍolabharadvāja for the Sixteen Arhats, Dīpaṃkara can stand for the whole group of Sakyamuni’s predecessors. In Tibetan Buddhism, Dīpaṃkara represents the buddhas of the past. In Chinese Buddhism, the buddha of the past is often identified as Kāśyapa Buddha (*Jiayefo* 迦葉佛), the last of Sakyamuni’s predecessors.

⁵⁹⁷ They are sometimes called the “Buddhas of the Vertical Three Generations” (*Shu sanshifo* 豎三世佛) to differentiate them from the “Buddhas of the Horizontal Three Generations” (*Heng sanshifo* 橫三世佛) made up of Amitabha Buddha (west), Śākyamuni Buddha (center) and Medicine Master Buddha (east). In this latter grouping, the character *shi* 世 is better translated as ‘world’ because those buddhas are understood to exist simultaneously; however that translation deemphasizes the neat, mandala-like spatiality suggested by the simple vertical-horizontal distinction in Chinese. An example of the Buddhas of the Horizontal Three Generations as the main icons at a Qing court Tibetan Buddhist monastery is found at Pulesi 普樂寺 (1767) in Chengde.

⁵⁹⁸ Although the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* do not appear in the earlier Qing pantheons (*The Three Hundred Icons* and *In Praise of the Sacred Images*), they do appear individually in the later sculptural pantheons in the Forbidden City with the same *mudrā* as the Yonghegong buddhas. For Dīpaṃkara, see Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, 32, fig. 1 B 29; Wang Jiapeng 王家鵬, ed., *Fanhualou* 梵華樓 [梵華樓] (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 2009) 238, fig. 183. For Maitreya, see Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, 31, fig. 1 B 28; Wang, *Fanhualou*, 244, fig. 189.

⁵⁹⁹ In some representations, the positions of Dīpaṃkara and Maitreya are reversed, with Dīpaṃkara at Sakyamuni’s left. Examples include the Ding Guanpeng painting and its textile versions, as well in the central icons at Puningsi in Chengde.

without ritual coverings. Stylistically, the three buddhas keep very closely to the proportions and imagery provided in the *Sutra of Iconometry*. A model image provided at the end of the sutra diagrams these proportions in very specific terms, and the Yonghegong buddhas clearly follow the 120-sor measurements stipulated in the text and laid out in the image. (Fig. 110-comparison)⁶⁰⁰ In Fig. 110, the horizontal lines overlain on the photograph match up rather closely with those on the model. Along with the general proportions, the head and facial features also follow the model, and the strict adherence to geometric balance creates a harmonious, if somewhat stylized appearance. The buddha's head is rather flat on top, with the *uṣṇīṣa* taking up the center third of the crown, and the elongated earlobes reaching down almost to the shoulders. The face is broad, with widely-set eyes, wide cheeks and a small mouth.

Although not as closely comparable in their proportions, the statues are broadly similar to another image of a robed image of Śākyamuni also in the *Sutra of Iconometry*, one that asserts in its caption that “[a]ll *Nirmaṇakāya* (*huashen* 化身) buddha images ... should use this as a general model.”⁶⁰¹ (Fig. 111) In both, the buddha's outer robe (*S. saṃghāti*) covers his left side and wraps around behind to partially cover his right shoulder. In the print, the robe on the right shoulder has a more sinuous single fold; in the statue the robe has two smaller and less prominent folds, revealing more of the buddha's gilded chest and arm. The robe covering the buddha's folded legs in the print has an energetic lightness, while in the statue the material seems thick, and the contours of the folds hang with an understated naturalism. The waistcloth (*antarvāsa*) in both print and statue stick tightly to the chest, the folds flat and stylized as if

⁶⁰⁰ Photography is not allowed in the hall interiors, so I am limited to published photos. Therefore, although a comparison of the iconometric Śākyamuni image in the *Sutra of Iconometry* with the Śākyamuni statue of the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* would be the best, I could not find a published image of Śākyamuni taken from the a direct, frontal angle. For Fig. 110, a photo of the Maitreya statue provides a workable, if not perfect, demonstration of the three buddhas' proportions.

⁶⁰¹ mGon-po-skyabs, Fig. 1, 54. I am adding *Nirmaṇakāya* to Cai's translation.

ironed. Nevertheless, the similarities between the printed model and the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* at Yonghegong are more striking than the differences.

Returning to the theme of imperial universalism, the three buddhas can also be interpreted on the basis of their political significance, placing them firmly in the mesocosm at Yonghegong. Two associations relate to topics from the previous chapter. First, as noted above, the works stick closely to the state-sanctioned iconometry and stylistic models propagated in the *Sutra of Iconometry*, linking the works to the various religious and political themes raised by that text. Second, as products of the Nepali artist summoned to court, the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* had a stylistic legitimacy and historical resonance with the glories of the Mongol Empire that was extremely potent in the context of the Qianlong court. Another element that may further link the works to the imperial role of Great Khan and Yonghegong's status as a "war temple" is the presence of three miniature suits of armor, placed as consecration items (*zhuangzang* 裝藏; T. *gzungs sgrub*) in each buddha, presumably to protect the site's patron.⁶⁰²

Finally, the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* help to underscore the preordained advent of Maitreya and the emperor's central role in that process as Ākavartin. However, there is another aspect of the Buddhas of the Three Ages as a subject that should not surprise us. Berger notes that another epithet for Mañjuśrī was "Enlightenment-mother of the Three Generations [Ages]" (*sanshi juemu* 三世覺母)⁶⁰³, a reference to the bodhisattva's role as "guardian of the wisdom of Vairocana."⁶⁰⁴ The three, therefore, are one, bringing us back yet again to the emperor's central role at Yonghegong.

⁶⁰² Lai and Chang, "Yung-ho Temple," 139.

⁶⁰³ Berger, "Buddhas," 238. The title is used in *Rosary of White Lotuses* to refer to Mañjuśrī in the context of recounting a hagiography of the Qing emperors. Dharmatāla, *Rosary of White Lotuses*, 104.

⁶⁰⁴ William E. Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: With Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1995 [1937]), 58; Also Foxue da cidian

The Sixteen Arhats (Shiliu luohan 十六羅漢; T. gnas brtan bcu drug)

1747. Hollow painted sackcloth (zimatuosha 紫麻脫沙), each ca. 155 cm. (Figs. 31-49)

The following list presents the *Sixteen Arhats* at Yonghegong identified by their Tibetan iconography and ordered accordingly. The list begins in the northwest, designated W1, and proceeds west to east, north to south alternating, i.e. W1, E1, W2, E2. The names I will use are in bold. Sanskrit transliteration follows Clark, 292-297. At Yonghegong and in Yonghegong publications, the arhats are identified according to the Chinese Buddhist order, and numbered north to south, first on the west side then on the east.⁶⁰⁵ This order is provided in brackets for reference.

1. W1 ***Aṅgaḥ*** (*Injieta* 因竭陀; T. *yan lag jung*) (Fig. 32)
[1. Subinda (?), *Supintuo* 蘇頻陀]
2. E1 ***Ajita*** (*Ashiduo* 阿氏多; T. *ma pham pa*) (Fig. 33)
[10. Panthaka, *Bantuojia* 半托迦]
3. W2 ***Vaṇavāsin*** (*Fanaposi* 伐那婆斯; T. *nags na gnas*) (Fig. 34)
[2. Nakula, *Nuojuluo* 諾距羅]
4. E2 ***Kālīka*** (*Jialijia* 迦裏迦; T. *dus ldan*) (Fig. 35)
[11. Rāhula, *Luoguluo* 羅沽羅]
5. W3 ***Vajrīputra*** (*Fasheluofo* 伐闍羅佛多; T. *rdo rje mo'i bu*) (Fig. 36)
[3. Bhadra, *Batuoluo* 跋陀羅]
6. E3 ***Bhadra*** (*Batuoluo* 跋陀羅; T. *bzang po*) (Fig. 37)
[12. Nagasena, *Najiaina* 那迦犀那]

佛學大辭典 (“Buddhist Studies Dictionary”), last updated January 4, 2013, <<http://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/佛學大辭典>>.

⁶⁰⁵ For the Chinese Buddhist identifications of the Yonghegong arhats, see for example Wang, *Palace of Harmony*, 42-5.

7. W4 **Kaṇakavatsa** (*Jianuojiafacuo* 迦諾迦伐蹉; T. *gser be'u*) (Fig. 38)
[4. Pindolabharadvāja, *Binduluobaluoduoshe* 賓度羅跋羅墮闍]
8. E4 **Kanakabharadvāja** (*Jianuojiaboliduoshe* 迦諾迦跋黎墮闍; T. *bha ra dhva dza gser can*) (Fig. 39)
[13. Angaja, *Yinjietuo* 因竭陀]
9. W5 **Bakula** (*Bagula* 巴沽拉; T. *ba ku la*) (Fig. 40)
[5. Kanakavatsa, *Jianuojiafacuo* 迦諾迦伐蹉]
10. E5 **Rāhula** (*Luoguluo* 羅沽羅; T. *sgra gcan 'dzin*) (Fig. 41)
[14. Vanavāsin, *Fanaposi* 伐那婆斯]
11. W6 **Cūḍapanthaka** (*Zhuchabantuo* 注茶半托; T. *lam phran bstan*) (Fig. 42)
[6. Kanakabharadvāja, *Jianuojiaboliduoshe* 迦諾迦跋厘憍闍]
12. E6 **Pinḍolabharadvāja** (*Binduluobaluoduo* 賓度羅跋羅墮; T. *bha ra dhva dza bsod snyoms len*) (Fig. 43)
[15. Ajita, *Ashiduo* 阿氏多]
13. W7 **Panthaka** (*Bantuojia* 半托迦; T. *lam bstan*) (Fig. 44)
[7. Kālīka, *Jialijia* 迦理迦]
14. E7 **Nāgasena** (*Najiayi* 那迦犀; T. *klu'i sde*) (Fig. 45)
[16. Cūḍapanthaka, *Zhuchabantuo* 注茶半托迦]
15. W8 **Gopaka** (*Jiebojia* 戒博迦; T. *sbed byed*) (Fig. 46)
[8. Vajrīputra, *Fasheluofoduo* 伐闍羅弗多羅]
16. E8 **Abheda** (*Abite* 阿秘特; T. *mi phyed pa*) (Fig. 47)
[17. Kāśyapa, *Jiaye* 迦葉]
17. W9 **Upāsaka Hvashang** (*Budai Heshang* 布袋和尚; T. *hwa shang*) (Fig. 48)
[9. Supaka, *Xubojia* 戌博迦]
18. E9 **Upāsaka Dharmatala** (*Damoduoluo* 達摩多羅; T. *ge nyen dhar ma ta*) (Fig. 49)
[18. No Sanskrit provided. *Juntubotan* 軍屠鉢嘆]

Seated on two long, rectangular stone platforms running north and south along the east and west walls of the Palace of Harmony and Peace, the colorful statues of the sixteen arhats and

their two attendants respectfully face the main altars of the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* in the center of the hall. Each arhat is highly individualized in posture, facial features and iconographic accouterment. (Fig. 31) Images of groups of arhats are a standard part of the ritual pantheon found in East Asian and Tibetan Buddhist temples.⁶⁰⁶ Their appearance in the main hall at Yonghegong flanking the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* is a typical location for their placement in Tibetan and Chinese temples, related to their role as disciples of Śākyamuni, who is often the central icon in a main hall. As early members of the monastic *sangha* the arhats are akin to ancestral figures for the monks of the monastery who make offerings to them. In the ritual life of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, daily offerings are made to the arhats, with more elaborate yearly rituals performed during the fourth month of the Tibetan calendar, and their placement in the main hall makes the arhats easily accessible for the daily services.⁶⁰⁷ Each of the Yonghegong arhat statues sits on his own low, decoratively carved wooden bench that is arranged on the long stone platform, leaving a space at the front of each bench where offerings are placed for each arhat.

The *Sixteen Arhats* in the Yonghegong Main Hall are handsome, if uninspired, statues and have received little substantive attention in scholarship on the site. They were created in 1747 (Qianlong 12) by the craftsmen of the Office of Wish Fulfillment under the direction of a lama designated “director of artisans” (*gongjiangzhang* 工匠長),⁶⁰⁸ using a technique I will refer

⁶⁰⁶ For an early overview of this complex tradition, see M. W. de Visser, *The Arhats in China and Japan* (Berlin: Oesterheld & Co., 1923). For studies focusing on the arhats in painting, see Stephen Little, “The Arhats in China and Tibet,” *Artibus Asiae* 52, no. 3/4 (1992): 255-281; Richard K. Kent, “Depictions of the Guardians of the Law: Lohan Painting in China,” in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850*, ed. Marsha Weidner. (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 183-213; Robert Linrothe, *Paradise and Plumage: Chinese Connections in Tibetan Arhat Painting* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, in collaboration with the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York, 2004).

⁶⁰⁷ Linrothe, *Paradise*, 13. Little notes that the arhats are also worshipped on other occasions such as the laying of a temple foundation and in consecrating ritual objects. Little, “Arhats,” 256.

⁶⁰⁸ Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 222.

to as “hollow painted sackcloth,” known in Chinese as *zimatuosha* 紫麻脫沙 (“Lost-sand hemp”) or *jianing* 夾紵 (“layered ramie”).⁶⁰⁹ “Hollow painted sackcloth” is similar to the better-known “hollow dry lacquer” sculpture technique used in earlier centuries, but uses paint instead of lacquer. A basic body of clay mixed with sand is made on a wooden armature, and then the clay is covered with strips of coarse cloth and paint. This cloth is then sculpted by hand into its final shape and the work is left to dry. When dry, the clay is removed and the hardened cloth sculpture is painted. The arhat sculptures at Yonghegong are painted with rich pigments, and fine, gold lines on their robes create detailed, decorative motifs that imitate fine silk textiles.

The Arhat Tradition in China and Tibet

Although arhat (S: *arhat*, Pali: *arahant*, C. 羅漢 *luohan*, “worthy one”) is a stage of Buddhist realization, there is a class of Buddhist deities known as “great arhats” (*da aluohan* 大阿羅漢) who are most often described as being among the senior disciples of Śākyamuni Buddha.⁶¹⁰ Groups of great arhats who appear in various standard sets of sixteen, eighteen and five hundred are those who have used their spiritual power to extend their lifespans in order to protect the Dharma until the coming of Maitreya, the future buddha. This direct connection to Maitreya may account in part for the popularity of the arhats at the Qianlong court, but they also have a multicultural character that perhaps added to their appeal to the Qianlong emperor. Their longevity, their asceticism and their mountain abodes may have aided their acceptance and

⁶⁰⁹ The technique is described only briefly in Niu, *Yonghegong foxiang*, 125. I suspect the addition of sand makes the clay easier to remove as well as economizing on clay. Whether the wooden armature is removed is not indicated.

⁶¹⁰ John S. Strong, “The Legend of the Lion-Roarers: A Study of the Buddhist Arhat Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja,” *Numen* 26, Fasc. 1 (Jun., 1979): 52. Kent suggests the term. Kent, “Depictions,” 184. Rhie and Thurman suggest the term “immortal” arhats. Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 102. Although I like the explicit association with the Daoist immortals to which the arhat tradition is clearly indebted, I feel that the term is imprecise as the arhats are not technically immortal.

popularity in a Chinese religious context long familiar with the Daoist immortals (神仙 *shenxian*), indigenous Chinese deities who share these characteristics with the great arhats. At Yonghegong, the arhats' relationship to Maitreya connects us to the macrocosm, while their multicultural significance allows for mesocosmic interpretation.

The earliest grouping of these great arhats was of the sixteen arhats, a tradition that Little finds the earliest reference to in the Northern Liang dynasty (357-439 CE) text titled *Rudachenglun* 入大乘論 (S: *Mahāyāna vatāraka śāstra*), and in a later, more extensive text titled *Da'aluohan Nandimiduoluo suoshuo fazhu ji*, 大阿羅漢難提蜜多羅所說法住記 ("Record on the Duration of the Dharma as Explained by the Great Arhat Nandimitra," henceforth *Fazhuji* 法住記).⁶¹¹ This text names, describes and discusses each of the sixteen arhats in turn beginning with the arhat Piṇḍolabharadvāja, and lists their abodes and the number of their followers. The list of sixteen arhats provided by the *Fazhuji* became the most common source for the list of arhats in the Chinese Buddhist tradition.⁶¹²

⁶¹¹ Little, "Arhats," 255. The original Indian text is lost, but the Chinese translation by Xuanzang is T. Vol. 49, No. 2030. A complete translation into French was the first in a Western language. Sylvain Lévi and Édouard Chavannes, "Les seize arhat protecteurs de la loi," *Journal Asiatique* 8 (1916): 1-166.

⁶¹² The Sanskrit approximations of the names of the arhats provided by Lévi and Chavannes seem to accord the most closely with the Chinese transliteration, and because of that I have chosen to use them throughout. My source for the Chinese is the online *Taishō Triptika*, http://www.cbeta.org/result/normal/T49/2030_001.htm (accessed 10/6/2010). Order from *Fazhuji* [variant Sanskrit renderings provided in brackets]:

1. Piṇḍolabharadvāja [Pindola Bharadvaja] (*Binduluobaluoduoshe* 賓度羅跋囉憍闍)
2. Kanakavatsa (*Jianuojiāfacuo* 迦諾迦伐蹉)
3. Kanakaparidhvaja [Kanakā Bharadvaja] (*Jianuojiābaliduoshe* 迦諾迦跋釐墮闍)
4. Subinda (*Subinduo* 蘇頻陀)
5. Nakula [Bakula, Vakula] (*Nuojuluo* 諾距羅)
6. Bhadra (*Batuoluo* 跋陀羅)
7. Kālīka (*Jialijia* 迦理迦)
8. Vajraputra [Vajrāputra] (*Fasheluofuduoluo* 伐闍羅弗多羅)
9. Śvapāka [Supaka] (*Shubojia* 戌博迦)
10. Panthaka (*Bantuojia* 半託迦)
11. Rāhula (*Luohuluo* 囉怛羅)
12. Nāgasena (*Najixina* 那伽犀那)
13. Īṅgāda [Aṅgaja] (*Yinjieduo* 因揭陀)

By the tenth century, the ranks of arhats in China were extended by two: the “Dragon-taming Arhat” (*Jianglong luohan* 降龍羅漢, often named as *Qingyou* 慶友 “Companion in Praise,” a translation of the Sanskrit *Nandimitra*, author of the *Fazhuji*), and the “Tiger-taming Arhat” (*Fuhu luohan* 伏虎羅漢, often called *Bintoulu* 賓頭盧, probably a variant transliteration of Piṇḍola, one of the most important of the arhats).⁶¹³ This addition created the set of eighteen arhats that became a standard number in the Chinese Buddhist pantheon.⁶¹⁴ However, in Chinese Buddhist art identification of the specific identities of painted or sculpted images of the eighteen arhats, a fraternity described by Berger as “...obscure, imprecisely described, slippery figures...,” can be difficult if not impossible.⁶¹⁵

Further complicating things, the arhats themselves were portrayed in two major modes.⁶¹⁶ One mode, which I will call the “ascetic” mode, portrays the arhats as beings whose extreme spiritual efforts are recorded in their gnarled and misshapen bodies and faces, an expressive form traced to the Tang dynasty monk-painter Guanxiu 貫休 (832-912).⁶¹⁷ The other, which I will

14. Vanavāsi [Vanavāsin] (*Fanaposi* 伐那婆斯)

15. Ajita (*Ashiduo* 阿氏多)

16. Cūḍapanthaka (*Zhutubantuojia* 注荼半託迦)

⁶¹³ Piṇḍolabhāradvāja, like Vaiśravaṇa for the Heavenly Kings, is sometimes seen as the chief of the arhats, and in ritual contexts may stand in for the entire group. De Visser, “Arhats,” 69-78. The important role of Piṇḍolabhāradvāja is also discussed in Strong, “*Lion-Roarer*,” 50-88.

⁶¹⁴ In contemporary Chinese Buddhism, a standardized iconography has developed for the arhats, expanded to eighteen. Many of the names are the same as in *Fazhuji*, but each has a brief short descriptive title added, such as “Maitreya, the Tiger-taming Arhat.” For a list and images from the contemporary Foguangshan tradition, see “The Assembly at Vulture Peak,” International Buddhist Progress Society, The Eighteen Arhats,” accessed February 28, 2013, <<http://www.ibps.org/english/history/assembly-at-vulture-peak.htm>>. An earlier, different modern list is discussed in De Visser, “Arhats,” 133-39.

⁶¹⁵ Berger, *Empire*, 128.

⁶¹⁶ For a more detailed treatment of these modes, see Kent, “Depictions,” 188-192.

⁶¹⁷ Guanxiu’s paintings of the arhats, and their subsequent “correction,” copying at the Qianlong court and engraving in stone for ink rubbing reproduction has been covered in a number of sources. Berger, *Empire*, 127-148; Amy McNair, “The Third Worthy One, Pindola-bharadvaja,” in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism, 850-1850*, ed. Marsha Weidner (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas; Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 262-64. The engravings were reproduced in a lacquer and jade screen kept in the “Qianlong Garden” in the Forbidden City, discussed by Berger in the section noted above, Nancy Berliner, and more extensively by Luo Wenhua. See Nancy Berliner, *The Emperor’s Private Paradise: Treasures from the Forbidden City* (New Haven and London: Peabody Essex Museum and Yale University Press, 2010) 156-173, and pl. 49; and

refer to as the “patriarchal” mode, seems to have its roots in portraiture of high-ranking Buddhist clerics with examples going back at least to the Tang dynasty but best known from the elegant, monochrome style of Northern Song painter Li Gonglin 李公麟 (d. 1106).⁶¹⁸ It represents the arhats as urbane monastics, dressed in fine silks and with a dignified and noble bearing. This mode is favored in Tibetan Buddhist imagery and is the mode of the Yonghegong arhats who, like the main icons of the Palace of Harmony and Peace, follow Tibetan Buddhist style and iconography.

The sixteen arhats, introduced to Tibet perhaps as early as the ninth century, became important deities in Tibetan Buddhism as well. The earliest evidence for a liturgical tradition related to the sixteen arhats comes from the eleventh century, and is attributed to Atiśa (980–1054 CE), a Buddhist master from the Pala kingdom of India, and the key figure in the “second transmission” of Buddhism to Tibet after a period of persecution.⁶¹⁹ His list of sixteen arhats begins with the arhat Aṅgaja and extends to a seventeenth, the lay supporter (S. *upāsaka*) Dharmatala. Shakyashri Bhadra (d. 1225), the Kashmiri teacher of the influential lama (and uncle of Kubilai Khan’s adviser Phagspa) Sakya Pandita (1182–1251), provided a text that gave iconographic descriptions of the sixteen arhats that became standard.⁶²⁰ Later texts by the Second Dalai Lama (Gédün Gyatso, T. *dge-'dun rgya-mtsho*, 1475–1542) and the Fifth Dalai Lama used Shakyashri Bhadra’s order of arhats, and set out the ritual practices for the sixteen arhats.⁶²¹ As the standard in use by the Géluk order, not surprisingly this was the list adopted by

Luo Wenhua, “Screen Paintings of Guanxiu's Sixteen Arhats in the Collection of the Palace Museum,” *Orientalia* 41, no. 6 (2010): 104–110. The original stone engravings are now in the Hangzhou Forest of Stelae in the former Confucian Temple, having been moved from the original site in 1963. Luo, “Screen Paintings,” 109.

⁶¹⁸ Kent, “Depictions,” 190.

⁶¹⁹ Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 102.

⁶²⁰ A translation is provided by Jeff Watt, “Praise to the Sixteen Arhats,” *Himalayan Art*, May, 1999, <http://www.himalayanart.org/pages/Arhat_Praise.htm>.

⁶²¹ Linrothe, *Paradise*, 13. Linrothe also notes later eighteenth century texts (after the founding of Yonghegong) that continue to influence Tibetan practice related to the arhats.

Rölpé Dorjé and propagated by the Qing court as the standard model in the pantheons discussed previously and in the well-documented case of the sixteen arhat paintings by Guanxiu that the emperor “corrected” according to the Tibetan system. In the Tibetan arhat tradition, the iconography of the arhats was much more standardized than in the Chinese tradition due in part to the iconographic descriptions of the arhats provided with the Shakyashri Bhadra text.⁶²²

The Arhats at Yonghegong: Familiarity Breeds Confusion

Despite this widespread propagation of the Tibetan version of the sixteen arhats and its adoption in elite circles in the eighteenth century, the Qianlong emperor’s version did not remain the final word, certainly in Chinese Buddhist temples, but even more surprisingly at the Qianlong emperor’s birthplace, Yonghegong. Even though Yonghegong is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery and the statues of the arhats follow Tibetan order and iconography, all major literature published under the auspices of Yonghegong identifies the arhats in an idiosyncratic version of the *Fazhuji* list (given in brackets with the arhat list that began this section).⁶²³ Upon close examination of the statues, however, the Yonghegong arhats clearly reflect the more standardized Tibetan iconography of the arhats.

One example will suffice. The arhat identified in the Yonghegong list as the sixteenth arhat, Cūḍapanthaka, carries a large monk’s staff and holds a bowl. (Fig. 45) In Tibetan iconography, this is an attribute of the fourteenth arhat Nāgasena, described by Shakyashri Bhadra as holding a vase and staff. The Nāgasena icons reproduced in the roughly contemporary

⁶²² Apart from the added iconographic descriptions, the Tibetan text has a slightly different list of arhats. There are two names that are different: in *Fazhuji*, #4 Subinda and #9 Supaka do not appear in the Tibetan list, and in the Tibetan list #15 Gopaka and #16 Abheda do not appear in *Fazhuji*.

⁶²³ See for example *Yonghegong daoguansuo kanwu*, n.p. Jin begins with Pindola in the *Fazhuji* sequence, but does add Hvashang and Dharmatala as 17 and 18. Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 219-21; Du begins with Supinda at West, North end and moves south, then to the east side, north to south. Du, *Palace of Harmony*, 42-5. Niu uses the same order and identifications as Du, but begins with West, South to North, then East North to South. Niu, *Yonghegong*, 305-6. Niu, Yonghegong foxiang, is the same as Du.

pantheons *The Three Hundred Icons* and *In Praise of the Sacred Images* show a seated arhat with a large staff in the proper left hand, and his other hand holds a vase.⁶²⁴ Further support for this identification comes not from iconography but from his position. Unlike the arhats in Chinese Buddhist temples, who are often arranged and numbered in a sequence that can progress on one side from south to north and then the other (which is assumed in the Yonghegong order), the Yonghegong arhats sequence actually alternates west to east and moves from north to south, an arrangement more common in Tibetan contexts. When numbered in this fashion, beginning with Angaja in the northwest corner of the hall and proceeding west to east, we arrive at number fourteen, Nāgasena. When the Yonghegong arhats are examined individually according to Tibetan iconography and other examples of Qianlong court-produced arhat images, they match up very clearly. The only major variance from the Tibetan order is the positions of Hva-shang (#17) and Dharmatala (#18), reversed from their usual order.

Both the Qianlong emperor and the Yonghegong scholars present their lists of arhats from positions of authority, imposing order upon an uncomfortably inconsistent group of deities. To the emperor, this inconsistency was dealt with by fiat, the imperial prerogative that he exercised in so many other areas. As asserted by the prefaces to the *Canon of Iconometry* in relation to Chinese styles of Buddhist art, the Chinese naming of the arhats was simply wrong, and at worst heterodox, requiring rectification based on what he viewed as the most orthodox system, that of the Géluk order. For the Chinese scholars writing on Yonghegong, the misidentification of the *Sixteen Arhats* may be more complicated, and is surprising given the substantial knowledge of Tibetan Buddhist iconography exhibited elsewhere by these authors in the publications in question. Perhaps the sheer ambiguity of specific arhat iconography in the

⁶²⁴ *In Praise of the Sacred Images*, Fig. 285. Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons*, 296. In some published photographs, the Yonghegong Nāgasena is missing his vase, and other arhats have also lost some of their iconographic attributes over the centuries, such as Kālīka's golden rings.

Chinese Buddhist sphere might lead to a lack of concern with specific identification of the individual arhats. Furthermore, the seeming familiarity of many deities from the Chinese Buddhist pantheon at Yonghegong (as found in the Gate of Harmony and Peace, the Temple of Emperor Guan and the Cave of Guanyin, and the Mountain of Five Hundred Arhats found elsewhere at the site) may have led the scholars to assume that the arhats, arguably the most “Chinese” of the major Buddhist deity types, followed the Chinese system.

A more fundamental factor in the misidentification of the arhats relates to the basic challenge in any study of the Qing court: the multicultural and multilingual nature of the milieu of the ruling elite. The Chinese sources on Yonghegong noted above rely exclusively on Chinese language sources, allowing the assumption of the Chinese Buddhist identifications to remain unchallenged since at least the 1930s. Furthermore, the Qing iconographies that would be so helpful in identifying the deities do not appear to have been published in Chinese sources. Luo Wenhua provides the most complete bibliography in a Chinese-language text that lists sources for the various Qing iconographies. Most are in Tibetan or Western language publications. He notes one version of the “Three Hundred Icons” published by the Fayuan Monastery in Beijing, and two others sources that he describes as being hard to find.⁶²⁵ Luo’s publication of the color pantheon from the Qianlong court-produced *Manchu Kanjur* is a welcome addition to Chinese scholarship, and Luo’s formidable linguistic talents provide an ideal model for scholars studying Qing Buddhist art.⁶²⁶

⁶²⁵ Luo, *Longpao*, 62, n. 1; 70, n. 1-2.

⁶²⁶ Luo Wenhua, ed., *Zang Chuan Fo Jiao Zhong Shen: Qianlong Man Wen Da Zang Jing Hui Hua* 藏传佛教众神: 乾隆满文大藏经绘画 [Tibetan Buddhist Pantheon: Paintings from the Qianlong Manchu Tripitika] (Beijing: Zi jin cheng chu ban she, 2003).

Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara (*Yonghegong Luojishuolifo* 雍和宮羅吉碩哩佛)⁶²⁷

Ca. 1745. White sandalwood, figure 93 cm, lotus base and back-support 101 cm.

(Fig. 107)

In comparison to the large bronze images of the *Buddhas of the Three Generations* with their resplendent, gilded halos, or to the colorful *Sixteen Arhats* in their dignified rows, there is another important statue that was formerly enshrined in the Palace of Harmony and Peace that is deceptively small and unassuming, but whose small size belies its political and religious significance: the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*.⁶²⁸ It is an important work that demands our attention as the first of the three works at Yonghegong that most directly represent the complex interplay of art, politics and religion at the site that is the theme of this study. In Chapter Seven, I introduced the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* and *Yuhuage Phagpa Lokeśvara* in relation to the statues' back-supports as representative of the work of the Nepali craftsmen in Beijing and their legacy. Here I will focus on the religious and political significance of the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* statue itself.

The specific iconography and style of this icon is discussed in a 1990 article by Ian Alsop.⁶²⁹ In it Alsop identifies it as a widely copied iconographic type, a form of Avalokiteśvara he calls the “Phagpa Lokeśvara” because the original is displayed on the central altar of the Phagpa Lhakhang, the oldest and most important shrine in the Potala, whose existence the shrine

⁶²⁷ My choice of this name for the statue combines the site, Yonghegong (to differentiate it from the nearly identical version from the Pavilion of Raining Flowers in the Forbidden City) with the name of the miraculous icon that is the source statue, the Phagpa Lokeśvara from the Phagpa Lhakang in the Potala in Lhasa, Tibet. Most Chinese sources simply identify it as some version of “White Sandalwood Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva statue” (*Baitanxiangmu Guanyinpusa xiang* 白檀香木觀音菩薩像), e.g. Jia Yang, et al., *Bao Zang*, v. 4, 33. *Luojishuoli* 羅吉碩哩 is the Chinese transliteration of the name from the Sanskrit that appears in the inscription on the reverse of the mandorla, reproduced in *Baozang*. Luo Wenhua provides other variant Chinese transliterations of *Luohaxilifo* (羅哈西里佛, 羅哈希里佛) and *Huohuaxilifo*, 活花希里佛 from the Qing archives. Luo, *Longpao*, 593.

⁶²⁸ Although long enshrined in the Palace of Harmony and Peace, the statue was prominently displayed for an extended period in an exhibition highlighting the relationship between Tibet and the Qing court housed in the Panchen Tower.

⁶²⁹ Alsop, “Phagpa Lokes'vara.”

probably predates.⁶³⁰ The *Phagpa Lokeśvara* has a unique array of stylistic characteristics that Alsop lists:

“...a high three-lobed crown of rather simple design; the hair in an elaborate chignon which spills in two long buns on either side of the head and crown, and bell-like earrings. The images also show a remarkable lack of ornamentation; they stand on a small, square base in a relatively stiff pose, with, when complete, the right hand in *varada mudra* (gesture of bestowal) and the left close to the thigh in a gesture of holding a (missing) lotus.”⁶³¹

These characteristics are clearly visible in the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* and *Yuhuage Phagpa Lokeśvara*. One difference between the two copies today relates to the addition of clothing and other adornments in the enshrinement of consecrated images in Tibetan Buddhist contexts. The Yonghegong statue as published in its current ‘museumified’ state lacks them, but the Yuhuage version has been published with them, as it was still displayed with its clothing when interior photographs of the pavilion were taken in the early 1990s, providing a sense of the original enshrined appearance of both icons. (Fig. 108).

Alsop’s article illuminates the miraculous, legendary history of the icon, which is traced back to the time of Tibetan emperor (T. *btsan po*) Songtsen Gampo (T. *Srong btsan sGam po*, c. 617-47). Before discussing the *Phagpa Lokeśvara*, the cultural significance of this emperor and his association with two other famous icons in Lhasa needs briefly to be addressed. Songtsen Gampo was a king of the Yarlung (T. *Yar-klungs*) dynasty that ruled a small kingdom that he greatly expanded into a vast empire that rivaled its contemporary, Tang China.⁶³² He is considered the first great Dharma King (S. *dharmarāja*, T. *chos rgyal*) of Tibet, who introduced Buddhism to Tibet, founded various important Buddhist temples, had the Tibetan script

⁶³⁰ The icon is also called the Potala Lokeśvara and the Arya Lokeśvara.

⁶³¹ Alsop, “Phagpa Lokes'vara,” n.p.

⁶³² A short historical overview is provided by Berzin. Alexander Berzin, “The History of the Early Period of Buddhism and Bon in Tibet,” The Berzin Archives, 1996, last updated August 24, 2012, <http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/study/history_buddhism/buddhism_tibet/details_tibetan_history/history_early_period_buddhism_tibet/Part_1.html>.

developed, and began to translate Buddhist texts into Tibetan. His introduction of Buddhism, although probably limited in scope, is associated with his marriage to a princess from Nepal, Bhrikuti Devi (perhaps legendary), and a princess from Tang China, Wencheng 文成 (d. 680), who brought their respective Buddhist traditions with them.

The cultural and historical impact of this link between China, Tibet and Nepal continues to resonate due to the fame of two statues, considered the most sacred images in Tibet, that are said to have been brought to Tibet by the princesses. One is the *Jowo Rinpoche* (T. *jo bo rin po che*) enshrined at the Jokhang temple (T. *jo khang*; C. *Dazhaosi* 大昭寺) in Lhasa, an image of Śākyamuni Buddha said to have been brought from China by Princess Wencheng. The other is the *Jowo Mikyö Dorjé* (T. *jo bo mi bskyod rdo rje*) enshrined at Ramoche temple (T. *ra mo che*; C. *Xiaozhaosi* 小昭寺) in Lhasa, an image of Akshobhya Buddha said to have been brought from Nepal by Princess Bhrikuti Devi.⁶³³ The recognition of the princesses as manifestations of the deities Green Tara (Bhrikuti Devi) and White Tara (Wencheng) further cements the importance of the multiple cultural and historical associations that the renowned icons represent: Tibet's first great emperor; the introduction of Buddhism; the founding of Lhasa; the links between Tibet, China and Nepal. The central importance of these statues in the ritual life of Tibetan Buddhists today keeps these associations pertinent.

Associations with Songtsen Gampo extend to the *Phagpa Lokeśvara*, but unlike the *Jowo Rinpoche* and *Jowo Mikyö Dorje* statues, traditions about the *Phagpa Lokeśvara* attribute to it a more miraculous origin that convey another kind spiritual significance to the statue. After a vision revealed its location, Songtsen Gampo sent a mendicant to retrieve one of four images that

⁶³³ Reynolds, et al., *Catalogue of the Newark Museum*, 16.

miraculously self-manifested in front of him from a sandalwood tree.⁶³⁴ This image was the *Phagpa Lokeśvara*, and it was brought back to the emperor. The other three miraculous images went to other destinations in Nepal and Tibet. All four of these images are the source for numerous pious replicas made and distributed throughout the Nepali and Tibetan-Buddhist world, including the two copies sent to the Qing court. The *Phagpa Lokeśvara*, then, is an example of a replicated, miraculous icon, similar to the better known “Udayana” or “Sandalwood Buddha”, an image of which can also be found at Yonghegong in the Tower of the Buddha’s Reflection (*Zhaofolou* 照佛樓).⁶³⁵ When the Fifth Dalai Lama began to construct the Potala palace in 1645, the *Phagpa Lokeśvara* statue was an important element in the construction of political legitimacy for the new government, making it not only an image with strong religious significance, but strong political significance as well.⁶³⁶

Political Significance of the Phagpa Lokeśvara

The *Phagpa Lokeśvara* was imbued with further political significance when a pious copy of this important icon was sent as a gift to the Qianlong emperor to celebrate the completion of Yonghegong as a Gélukpa monastery. The sender was Polhanas (T. *Po lha nas*; C. *Poluonai* 頗羅鼐, 1689-1747, r. 1728-47), a local Tibetan leader who was supported by the Qing court as administrator of Eastern and Western Tibet after he gained control of Lhasa in 1728 during a

⁶³⁴ The story is from *Gyalrab Salwai Melong* (T. rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long) “The Clear Mirror of the Royal Genealogies,” attributed to Sakyapa Sonam Gyaltzen (T. Sa-skyapa Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan; 1312-75), translated by Mimi Church. Alsop, n.p.

⁶³⁵ For details on the Udayana Buddha and the tradition of replication of miraculous icons in a Japanese Buddhist context, see: Donald F. McCallum, “The Saidaiji Lineage of the Seiryōji Shaka Tradition,” *Archives of Asian Art* v. 49 (1996): 51-67; and Donald F. McCallum, “The Replication of Miraculous Images: the Zenkoji Amida and the Seiryōji Shaka,” in *Images, Miracles and Authority in Asian Religious Traditions*, ed. Richard H. Davis (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998) 207-226.

⁶³⁶ Anne Chayet, “The Potala, Symbol of the Power of the Dalai Lamas,” in *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Françoise Pommaret, trans. Howard Solverson (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 43-44.

civil war. Polhanas was a key figure for the Qing court, as he maintained peace and stability in the region and fought to keep out of Tibet the powerful Zunghar Mongol empire, the main rival of the Qing in Central Asia. The Qianlong emperor was deeply involved in wars against them in the mid-eighteenth century. As part of maintaining good relations with the court, in February of 1745 Polhanas sent a Śākyamuni Buddha statue that was enshrined as the main icon in the Hall of the Dharma Wheel at Yonghegong (discussed further in that section below). Later in the same year, Polhanas sent the copy of the Phagpa Lokeśvara now enshrined at Yonghegong. The quadrilingual inscription on the back of the icon's back-support provides the details of his gift, and concludes with the deity's name transliterated from each of the other languages, an authoritative multilingualism that was a reminder and reinforcer of Qing imperial dominion. It reads:

*Inscription*⁶³⁷

Commandery Prince [*junwang* 郡王] of Tibet, Polhanas, respectfully congratulates the Great Mañjuśrī Emperor for comforting all sentient beings by propagating the Gélukpa teachings and establishing a new temple. [He] reverently submits this white sandalwood, adorned and merit-making⁶³⁸ Lokeśvara⁶³⁹ Buddha, to be presented to your envoy⁶⁴⁰ Nang su dan jin yan pin er [*two illegible characters*⁶⁴¹] to the capital on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month of the tenth year of Qianlong (December 16, 1745),” the memorial records. [The icon will be] worshipped in Yonghegong by imperial decree. [The deity is] named *jian lai zi ke* in Tibetan (T. *spyen ras gzigs*), named *ni du bo er wu zhe ke qi* (Mo. *Nidü-ber üjegci*)⁶⁴² in Mongolian, [and] named *Guan yin pu sa* in Chinese.

⁶³⁷ The original inscription is provided in a photograph of the rear of the backing plate (*banrui* 板蕊) of the back-support, with a transcription into simplified characters. Jia Yang, *Bao Zang*, v. 4, 33. Punctuation of the Chinese original follows the transcription. The English translation is based on the English version of the text. Zla-ba-tshe-riñ and Zhongyi Yan, *Precious Deposits: Historical Relics of Tibet, China*, vol. 4 (Beijing, China: Morning Glory Publishers, 2000), vol. 4, 33.

⁶³⁸ “Adorned and merit-making” for *zhuangyan liyi* 莊嚴利益.

⁶³⁹ *Luojishuoli* 羅吉碩哩.

⁶⁴⁰ Zla-ba-tshe-riñ, *Precious Deposits*, translates *yilaishi* 伊來使 as “envoy.” The title does not appear in Li.

⁶⁴¹ They may be *gongqing* 恭請, based on a similar wording in the inscription on the back of the *Polhanas Sakyamuni* in the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. I translate the term as “respectfully invited.”

⁶⁴² Source for the Mongolian is “Avalokiteshvara, Chaturbhūja — Mongol: Janraisig (Nidü-ber üjegci) — He Who Looks With Eyes,” Tibetan Mongolian Museum Society, accessed February 28, 2013, <<http://www.tibetan-museum-society.org/tibetan-art-museum-gallery/exhibit.php?id=6&sortby=deity>>.

西藏郡王頗羅鼎恭慶曼殊室利大皇帝為眾生安逸，大興黃教，建立新廟，敬進白檀粧嚴利益羅吉碩哩佛，交伊來使囊素丹津顏品爾．．．，於乾隆十年十一月二十四日至京具奏。奉旨供奉於雍和宮，番稱鑾賴滋克，蒙古稱尼都伯爾悟哲克齊，華稱觀音菩薩。

To sum up, the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* is an excellent example of Qing court's sophisticated use of works with multivalent symbolic value. It was a pious copy of a miraculous icon; it was connected with great Tibetan rulers of the past like Songtsen Gampo and the Fifth Dalai Lama; and finally as a tribute gift it cemented the relationship of Polhanas to the Qing court that helped him to maintain his rule. Today, the work continues to function as an important political symbol and is used as evidence of Qing suzerainty in Tibet, a legitimate authority that the People's Republic of China asserts it is heir to. Niu, for example, expresses this attitude by interpreting works such as the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* as proving "...that Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory since ancient times by indisputable historical facts."⁶⁴³ The work figures prominently in most recent publications on Yonghegong from China, which emphasize its history and political significance over its religious or aesthetic value. Perhaps most representative of this trend is found in a high quality, five volume set published in Chinese and English versions in 2000 called *Precious Deposits: Historical Relics of Tibet, China* (Bao Zang: *Zhongguo Xizang lishi wenwu* 寶藏：中国西藏历史文物). In it, the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* and its inscription appear not in the section on religious materials but in the preceding section on "Political and Military Affairs," where it appears along with the famous "Golden Urn" at Yonghegong used for selecting tulkus.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴³ "...以无可争辩的历史事实证明西藏自古以来就是中国领土的完整组成部分." Niu, *Yonghegong*, 279.

⁶⁴⁴ Jia Yang, *Bao Zang*, 8-85.

Hall of the Dharma Wheel (*Falundian* 法輪殿)

The Hall of the Dharma Wheel is the next major hall at Yonghegong that houses a number of works that have significance in the three spheres. The most prominent is the first of the two colossi of Yonghegong, the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* that has been the central icon of the hall since the mid-1920s. The next is the *Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*, a tribute statue sent from Polhanas slightly earlier than the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*. I will focus on these two works in this section. Other significant works in the hall include the immense, screen-like *Mountain of Five Hundred Arhats* sculpture, the “Third-day Tub” used to bathe the infant Qianlong emperor, throne-like rostrums reserved for the Dalai Lama (on the west) and the Panchen Lama (on the east), and a number of calligraphic panels. Other works for which little information is available are also found in the hall and include an ornate miniature *chörten* on the east side of the hall, a gilded Manjusri statue on the west, and large murals illustrating the life of Śākyamuni Buddha covering the east and west walls. In front of the murals are shelves that store the volumes of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, the 108 volumes of the *Kanjur* (T. *bka' 'gyur*) on the west and the 207 volumes of the *Tanjur* (T. *bstan 'gyur*) on the east, appropriate to the hall's function as a place for “turning the Wheel of the Dharma,” or preaching the doctrine.

The cruciform plan of the hall and its interior arrangement allow it to be divided into four areas: (1) the main ritual space, to either side and in front of the central platform with the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* statue; (2 and 3) the east and west wings, each now cordoned off with a low railing and housing the numerous volumes of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, as well as displaying the Śākyamuni murals and other ritual objects; and finally (4) the open area behind the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, today used to display the *Mountain of Five Hundred Arhats* sculpture and the “Third-day Tub”.

Interior Architecture

As a visitor passes through the axial halls of Yonghegong, the interiors reflect an increasingly Tibetan character, and I will briefly highlight some of the Tibetan features in the Hall of the Dharma Wheel here. This character comes from both the Tibetan-style interior decoration and the main icons of the hall, but also from the function of the hall that dictated the unusual architectural form. As noted in Chapter Six, the hall was and is used for daily ritual gatherings of monks, and therefore has the largest interior space of any at Yonghegong. Long rows of low desks, extending north-south, are provided for the monks and are arranged along the sides and in front of the altar, facing each other in long rows.⁶⁴⁵ (Fig. 56) Although the rows of desks can be set up in other halls for special ceremonies, as noted previously only the Hall of the Dharma Wheel has the space appropriate for large numbers of monks to perform daily services, and the desks remain in place in the hall throughout the year.

Timber-frame architecture has some structural limitations in creating large, open interior spaces and in order to create the needed space in this hall, it combines what are really three independent structures linked by a joined roof. Where the larger, central structure meets the outer portico structures, it creates an east-west line of paired columns separated by roughly one meter. (Fig. 56) Although this might lead to an impression of an overly cluttered interior with a multitude of columns, this is mitigated by a number of factors. First, the column pairs are perpendicular to the entrance and not immediately noticeable upon entering because the front column partially masks the rear one of the pair. Second, the four rear pairs are blocked from view: the two central pairs by the central platform and colossal statue, and the two outer pairs by the elevated rostrums provided for the Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama, placed to either side of

⁶⁴⁵ Lessing discusses this in “The Interior of Lamaist Temples.”

the main altar. Finally, the visitor is distracted from any sense of a “forest of columns” by the other visual spectacles in the hall. The dark red columns tend to disappear in the subdued light in the interior of the hall, and are more than overshadowed by the ceiling itself. The caisson ceilings, the brackets, the immense column-top tie beams, are all brightly painted and gilded with decorative motifs and gilded Tibetan script. Furthermore, the light filtering down from the five dormer windows draws the visitors eyes to the illumined upper section of the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, and to the large *thangka* paintings mounted up in the window wells. Finally, as is typical in Tibetan temples, long, embroidered and appliqué silk decorations hang from the ceiling and add color and visual complexity to the interior.

Inscriptions

The calligraphic inscriptions in this hall include large, horizontal four-character plaques (*biane* 匾額) and eleven-character column couplets. One plaque, and probably a second, is by the Xianfeng emperor (咸豐, r. 1850-1861); the rest are by the Qianlong emperor.

Horizontal plaque over the south door, by the Xianfeng emperor:

Miao Jin Wu Wei 妙盡無為

“Profound Cessation Without Effort.”⁶⁴⁶

Horizontal plaque on the transom in front of the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, probably by the Xianfeng emperor:⁶⁴⁷

Wu Liang Shou Lun 無量壽輪

“Infinite Life Recurring.”⁶⁴⁸

Horizontal plaque over the north door:

Heng He Fa Yu 恒河筏喻

“The Metaphor of the Raft in the Ganges.”⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁶ Translation based on Niu, *Yonghegong*, 465.

⁶⁴⁷ Niu notes that the calligraphy resembles that of the Xianfeng emperor, but the seal is indistinct. *Ibid.*, 444.

⁶⁴⁸ Translation based on *Ibid.*, 465-6.

⁶⁴⁹ Translation based on *Ibid.*, 466-7.

Couplet flanking *Colossal Tsongkhapa*:

(East) *Shi se shi kong lianhai cihang you liudu*; 是色是空蓮海慈航游六度

“[It] is form and/or [it] is emptiness; in the lotus sea, the boat of mercy floats through the six *pāramitās*,”⁶⁵⁰

(West) *Bu sheng bu mie xiangtai huijing qi sanming*. 不生不滅香臺慧鏡啓三明

“Neither arising nor ceasing; [mounting] the incense platform [and facing] the Wisdom-mirror opens the three insights [of the arhat].”⁶⁵¹

Colossal Tsongkhapa (Zongkaba 宗喀巴; T. tsong kha pa)

Ca. 1917, installed ca. 1924-5. Gilded copper, 6.1 m. (Fig. 56)

At Yonghegong today, the main, central icon of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel is impossible to miss. An immense image of the noted patriarch of the Gélukpa, the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* sits on a large marble platform in the center of the hall, its head reaching up into the open space of the central dormer window. The figure is piously clothed in colorful silk robes, his hands draped with ritual scarves. Light from the window illuminates Tsongkhapa’s gilded face and pointed, yellow pandit’s cap, and glints off of the massive gilded “Six-ornament Throne of Enlightenment” back-support behind the figure. His hands form the *dharmacakramudrā*, reflecting his role as a teacher of the Dharma. Lotus stems emerge from his hands and extend to lotus thrones above his right and left shoulders that support a sword and book, the identifying attributes of Mañjuśrī. Both Tsongkhapa and Rölpe Dorjé, as well as the Qianlong emperor, were considered emanations of that deity. Although the head and hands of the statue seem disproportionately large, particularly when viewed from the front, this is overshadowed by the size and decorative splendor of the work that convey its foremost message: the central importance of Tsongkhapa to the Gélukpa.

⁶⁵⁰ Following Berger’s translation of the Qianlong emperor’s poem “是一是二”. Berger, *Empire*, 51.

⁶⁵¹ Translation based on Ibid., 463-5.

The *Colossal Tsongkhapa* fits so appropriately into the vast interior it seems as if the hall were designed to fit the statue. Furthermore, the pivotal role of Tsongkhapa as a teacher, even the “wheel-turning” mudrā of the colossal statue, although standard to images of Tsongkhapa, perfectly fit the function and the name of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. However, as the date of the statue makes clear, it was not made until 1917, and not installed until ca. 1924. In fact, the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, like the other works in this chapter, may have been created in a highly charged political and religious atmosphere. Lessing, in an unpublished study of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel, notes that the statue was paid for by “Mongol nobility and their Manchu and Chinese sympathizers” after the fall of the Qing.⁶⁵² A Mongolian lama, Bai Puren 白普仁 (1870-1927) is credited by Yonghegong with having collected the donations to make the statue, beginning in 1910.⁶⁵³ Lessing notes that he saw the completed work in 1917,⁶⁵⁴ and that it was installed after the arrival of the exiled Ninth Panchen Lama in Beijing in 1924.⁶⁵⁵ Niu gives 1931 as the date of the final gilding and consecration of the statue.⁶⁵⁶ Lessing notes that the consecration items placed inside the statue took ten years of labor and cost “20 - 30,000 Mexican silver dollars.”⁶⁵⁷ Both Bai Puren and the Ninth Panchen Lama were very active in the propagation of Tibetan Buddhism in China in the early twentieth century, and their activity at

⁶⁵² Ferdinand Lessing, “Hall VII. Fa-lun-tien, Statue of Tsong-kha-pa,” unpublished manuscript, Alex Wayman and Ferdinand Lessing Manuscript Collection, Naritasan Buddhist Library 成田山仏教図書館, Naritasan Shinshōji Temple 成田山新勝寺, Narita, Japan. For clarity, I have written out abbreviations used by Lessing.

⁶⁵³ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 309.

⁶⁵⁴ Although the 1917 date suggests that the commissioning of the work by what Lessing implies were Qing sympathizers may have been related to the ill-fated imperial restoration in that year led by Zhang Xun 張勳 (1854-1923) and Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), I have been unable to substantiate any connections. A photograph of the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, probably ca. 1917 when Lessing saw it,

⁶⁵⁵ For the 1924 date, see Niu, *Yonghegong foxiang*, 132. The Panchen Lama had fled Tibet after a dispute with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 9.

⁶⁵⁶ Niu, *Yonghegong*, 309.

⁶⁵⁷ The items included many ingots of gold and silver, 500 gilded statues, nine “precious vases” filled with precious stones, incense, medicine, etc., and many rolls of printed mantra, wrapped in yellow satin. Lessing, “Hall VII,” 7-9.

Yonghegong seems to have begun with the loss of imperial funding for the monastery in ca. 1923.⁶⁵⁸

As Gray Tuttle has argued, in this complex period “...both state actors and members of religious institutions readily adopted and adapted religious traditions in order to advance their respective interests.” These interests included the Republican government, who Tuttle argues “...attempted to use Buddhism to incorporate Tibet in the modern Chinese nation-state;”⁶⁵⁹ the Tibetan Buddhist leaders seeking both to spread the Dharma and for financial support, either those in exile like the Panchen Lama or those like the monks at Yonghegong who lacked their traditional funding source; and finally Chinese people who turned to Tibetan Buddhist practices for the ‘protection of the country (*huguo* 護國)’ during a time of great political instability.⁶⁶⁰ The construction, installation and consecration of the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* was reflective of these diverse motivations.

Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha (Poluonai Shijiamounifo xiang 頗羅鼎釋迦牟尼佛像)

Early Qing (?). Statue: gilded copper; 40 cm. Throne: bronze, 22 cm. Back-support, 110 cm. Sumeru-throne platform: wood, 24 cm. (Fig. 112)

In front of the *Colossal Tsongkhapa*, on an altar table usually laden with altar fittings and offerings, is a comparatively small statue of Śākyamuni Buddha. Given its size, it might be completely overshadowed by the immense statue behind it, but the bright gilding of the work and the reverence to it demonstrated by the silk robes and offering scarves that cover the image point

⁶⁵⁸ Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 81.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

to a work of special significance. This is the *Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*, a work that returns us to what by now may be the familiar world of the eighteenth-century Qianlong court. A few months before the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara* was sent to the Qing court, Polhanas was requested by the emperor to send this icon, according to the quadrilingual inscription on the rear of the back-support. The Chinese text reads:

*Inscription*⁶⁶¹

A decree from the twenty-second day of the first month of the tenth year of Qianlong (February 22, 1745): “By special edict Commandery Prince of Tibet Poluonai (Polhanas) should invite the Buddha Icon of Great Benefit to the capital to be installed. Poluonai and the Dalai Lama jointly arranged [that it] be presented to Imperial Commissioner Vice Commander-in-chief Suo Bai [and] respectfully invited to the capital on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month of this year (September 25, 1745),” the memorial records. [The icon will be] worshipped in Yonghegong by imperial decree.

乾隆十年正月二十二日奉

特旨命西藏郡王頗羅鼐將有大利益佛像請至京城供奉，頗羅鼐隨與達賴喇嘛公同閱定，交欽差副都統索拜恭請於本年九月二十五日至京 具奏 奉旨供奉於雍和宮。

Unlike the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*, whose inscription suggests that it was sent as a congratulatory gift by Polhanas, this icon was requested by a special edict from the emperor. Based on the reference in the inscription to the icon as “the Buddha Icon of Great Benefit” (*you da liyi foxiang* 有大利益佛像), it may have been a work believed to have special charismatic powers, much like the Phagpa Lokeśvara or “Sandalwood Buddha” images also found at Yonghegong, but whether it was a replicated image like those is not indicated.⁶⁶² Similarly

⁶⁶¹ The inscription is provided in Li Lixiang 李立祥, “Yonghegong Falundian nei de Shijiamouni foxiang” 雍和宮法輪殿內的釋迦牟尼佛像, in *Zoujin Yonghegong* 走近雍和宮 (“Entering Yonghegong”), ed.. Yonghegong Administration Dept (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1999), 81-3. It also includes a short poetic encomium by the Qianlong emperor.

⁶⁶² Li quotes a 1921 booklet, *Yonghegong fawu zhanlan hui foxiang wupin shuoming ce* 雍和宮法物展覽會佛像物品說明冊 (“Yonghegong Buddhist Articles Exhibition Organization Instruction Booklet on Buddhist Icons and Articles”), that notes that “...wherever the [*Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*] statue is worshipped, the Buddhist teaching is prosperous” 凡供奉此佛之處法教大興. Li, “Yonghegong Falundian,” 82.

important, of course, was the icon's role in cementing the relationship between the Qing court and Polhanas, as discussed above.

The statue is small, but very elegantly modeled and with meticulously crafted details. The figure reflects the Kashmiri style of Buddhist sculpture in the facial features, the soft treatment of the snailshell curls, and the rounded folds of the drapery.⁶⁶³ It is an image of Śākyamuni preaching the Dharma, as symbolized by his hands in *dharmacakramudrā*, echoing the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* behind him. This symbolic connection reinforces the overt message of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel, the preaching of the Dharma.

Two photographs of the central platform before the installation of the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* give a sense of how the space might have appeared during the Qianlong period. (Figs. 113 and 114) The marble platform could be accessed by short flights of stairs at the front and sides. At the rear of the platform is a large partition that fills the space between the columns and reaches up to the crossbeams. On the partition is hung one of the textile versions of Ding Guanpeng's *Buddhas of the Three Ages*, discussed previously.⁶⁶⁴ Although in Fig. 113 the *Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha* is installed on an altar table on the platform, it has a temporary quality, and could probably be moved when the platform was used to elevate the chair of the abbot or other high-ranking lama for teaching or officiating in a ritual. A similar arrangement can be seen in the interior of the Hall of Ten-thousand Dharmas Returning as One (*Wanfaguiyidian* 萬法歸一殿), the main hall of the Putuozongchengmiao in Chengde. (Fig. 115) There is a marble platform, accessible by stairs, with a seat in the center, and another *Buddhas of the Three Ages* tapestry rising to the crossbeams in this vast interior space.

⁶⁶³ For a stylistically similar 10th-11th century Kashmiri image, see Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion*, 100, and the description by G. Leonov.

⁶⁶⁴ Unfortunately, the couplet to either side of the screen is unreadable in the photograph. However, given the few legible characters, it also does not appear in the *Guochaogongshi*, nor is it mentioned by Niu, suggesting that it may not have been an imperial inscription.

Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (*Wanfuge* 萬福閣)

The interior structure of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness, as discussed in Chapter Six, is made up of a large central architectural well, surrounded by a ground floor and two upper stories. Filling the well is the most important work in the pavilion, the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva*, that this section will focus on. Covering the walls of the interior well are murals of numerous repeated buddhas in blue and green landscapes, each with individualized iconography and surrounded by clouds. At ground level, the walls display a series of forty-one thangka paintings depicting one hundred and eight stories from the life of Śākyamuni Buddha, sent as a gift from the Seventh Dalai Lama in 1745 for the opening of Yonghegong. In front of the thangkas are cases housing miniature images of the sixteen arhats, awaiting Maitreya's coming, and making their third appearance at the site along with the group in the Palace of Harmony and Peace and the *Mountain of Five Hundred Arhats* in the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. Although the upper stories are not open to visitors, the site has published photographs of what appear to be pressed-clay *tsa-tsa* images, probably the same longevity deities seen on the Longevity Towers in the Gate of Harmony and Peace. In the inner well, the pillars that frame the open spaces of each floor display column couplets, a pair for each cardinal direction on the second and third floor. Three couplets by the Qianlong emperor will give a sense of the set.⁶⁶⁵ They read:

Inscriptions

Third Floor, North: ⁶⁶⁶

Yi bukesiyi shuo weimiao fa 以不可思議說微妙法

“Apply the incomprehensible to explain the subtle Dharma;”

⁶⁶⁵ According to Niu, the east and west couplets were missing, and the text was retrieved from the *Ri Xia Jiu Wen Kao*. Photos from before the interior restoration show the west couplets in place, but other recent photos from after the restoration do show them missing.

⁶⁶⁶ Niu lists this as the south couplet, but it is on the north side, behind Maitreya, in photographs. Translation based in part on Niu, *Yonghegong*, 475-6.

Ju wuliang youxun zuo qingjing shen 具無量由旬作清淨身

“Experience infinite *yojanas* (Indian units of distance) to create a self pure and uncluttered.”

Third Floor, East:⁶⁶⁷

He dadi cheng xing, fei you wei fa 合大地成形非有為法

“Uniting all things in becoming, [it] transcends phenomena;”

Yu zhongsheng tong ti, zuo ru shi guan 與眾生同體作如是觀.

“Mankind and Buddha are of the same essence, strive for this perception.

Third Floor, West:⁶⁶⁸

Zhangliu xian jinshen, fei se fei kong; 丈六顯金身非空非色

“The golden colossus manifest, transcending emptiness and form;”

Daqian gui baosuo, ji jing ji xin 大千歸寶所即鏡即心

“The boundless universe returns to the place of treasures (*nirvāṇa*), equating mirror and heart.”

Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva (C. Milepusa 彌勒菩薩; T. byams pa mgon po)

1750. Gilded sandalwood, 18 m above ground, 8 m underground. (Fig. 61)

The *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* is not only a physically massive work of art, it has a stylistic solidity, a weighty thickness that almost suggests that the sculptors wished to retain a sense of the huge tree trunk it was carved from. Although the figure’s proportions were adjusted to account for the size of the work and the angle of viewing, it still appears disproportionately thick at the base. The drapery folds lie flat as if ironed in place, the jewelry and scarves cling to the body. The formal stiffness is alleviated somewhat by the huge silk offering scarves draped over the figures arms, the colorful blue hair, red glass rosary beads and inlaid gems (probably also glass), and in recent years by the warm sheen of its re-gilded surface. Despite these minor

⁶⁶⁷ Translation based in part on Ibid., 477.

⁶⁶⁸ Translation based in part on Ibid, 476-7.

formal shortcomings, the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* is still a visually stunning, even awe-inspiring work in its ornate architectural context.

Jin notes that the Chahandaerhan lama 察漢達爾罕喇嘛, a Mongolian tulku, was the designer of the statue and supervisor of the project, which involved craftsmen from various court workshops from the Zaobanchu, the Office of Wish-fulfillment, and lama artisans from the Zhongzhengdian.⁶⁶⁹ Lai and Chang calculate the entire cost of the project, including materials, transportation and labor, to be 86,038.54 taels of silver and 315.07 taels of pure gold (*chijin* 赤金).⁶⁷⁰

The *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* displays standard Tibetan Buddhist iconographic elements, but these elements seem to mesh tightly with the recurring themes in the symbolic vocabulary at Yonghegong. Maitreya is represented in princely robes and jewels, like other bodhisattvas but also perhaps reminiscent of the princes who called Yonghegong home while they were, like Maitreya, “heirs to the throne” in retrospect. Like many forms of Maitreya, the deity’s imminent salvific action is represented by his stance, ready to engage the world with his feet placed firmly on the ground, rather than in a more quietistic seated posture. His right hand is in the *mudrā* of debate (S. *vitarkamudrā*) actively promoting the realization of those in his presence, and identical to the *mudrā* displayed by the Qianlong emperor in his *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin* portraits. Floating at shoulder height are the *kuṇḍikā*, the water-dropper used in ritual purification and initiation, and the *dharmaśakra*, the wheel of the teachings that is also the defining symbol of the *Ākravartin*.

⁶⁶⁹ His cites his source only as *Neiwufu Yangxindian zaobanchu shili* 內務府養心殿造辦處事例. Jin, *Yonghegong zhilue*, 285.

⁶⁷⁰ Their source is the *Neiwufu zouxiaodang* 內務府奏銷檔 v. 221, record dated Qianlong 15, 1 月 21 日. Lai and Chang, “Yung-ho Temple,” 136.

Maitreya has been a popular deity in China for many centuries, famously represented in colossal, rock-cut form at Yungang 雲崗 in Shanxi province (c. 460-67), Leshan 樂山 in Sichuan (803) and the Tang dynasty example at the Bingling Monastery 炳靈寺 grottoes in Gansu. Part of Maitreya's popularity throughout the Buddhist world may stem from his status as both *imminent* and *immanent*. As the coming buddha, Maitreya is not only a manifestation of hopes for a more perfect future, but a reminder of Buddhist notions of cyclical time and impermanence as our world alternates periods of flowering and decay. As such, it should be emphasized that although Maitreya is often discussed in Western studies in terms of millenarian messianism, Sponberg points out that the Judeo-Christian sense of these terms is not strictly applicable to Maitreya. "Maitreya is the next Buddha, not the *final* Buddha."⁶⁷¹ In most versions of the Maitreya mythos, he/she is in fact a *post*-millennial figure, arriving after the Golden Age has been inaugurated by a *Ākavartin*, and not the creator of it.

From imminence to immanence, Maitreya is unlike other buddhas in that the deity is currently present in our world system. The Tuṣita Heaven in which he resides is understood as one of the levels of the Desire Realm (S. *Kāmadhātu*) of which our world is a part. As Robinson and Johnson note,

Maitreya, unlike the Buddhas before him, is alive, so he can respond to the prayers of worshippers. Being compassionate, as his name indicates (its Sanskrit root means 'benevolent'), he willingly grants help; and being a high god in his present birth, he has the power to do so. His cult thus offers its devotees the advantages of theism and Buddhism combined.⁶⁷²

⁶⁷¹ Sponberg argues that, rather than reject Maitreya from discussions of messianism on this basis, we should "...expand and modify our concept of messianism, not simply...plug Buddhism into it." Alan Sponberg, "Epilogue: Prospectus for the Study of Maitreya," in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 295-6.

⁶⁷² Richard H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1982) 79-80. Also quoted in Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The Many Faces of Maitreya: A Historian of Religions' Reflections," in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 13-14.

Berger refers to the imminent character of the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* at Yonghegong by describing the giant statue, tightly contained within its architectural casing, as, like Maitreya, "...generating, egglike, in a remote mountain cave (like a monk on an extended retreat), the walls of which he will shatter when the right moment arrives."⁶⁷³ As she also notes, Maitreya is a recurring figure at Yonghegong.⁶⁷⁴ He appears in three forms in the halls on the main ritual axis of Yonghegong. He is first encountered in the Gate of Harmony and Peace in the form of Budai Heshang, and although not identified as Maitreya in the Qing pantheons, he clearly had this significance in a Chinese Buddhist context. The next appearance of Maitreya is in seated buddha form in the Palace of Harmony and Peace, where he represents the future as one of the *Buddhas of the Three Ages*. His final appearance is of course far more dramatic: the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva*

The Political Significance of the Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva

By this point it should be no surprise that for the Qianlong court both the message and the medium of the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* had important political associations that link it to the mesocosm. Part of this symbolism related to the emperor's role as *Ākṛavartin*, but another related to the court's patronage of the Géluk order. Berger asserts that "Maitreya is, in many ways, the focus of Gelukpa attention—particularly so in Mongolia."⁶⁷⁵ She notes a few examples to underline this importance, to which I add some details. The Tibetan name for Yonghegong, *Gandenchinchöling*, was not only the Tibetan term for the Tuṣita Heaven, but was also the name of the first Gélukpa monastery founded by the influential religious reformer Tsongkhapa (T. *rJe*

⁶⁷³ Berger, *Empire*, 120.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 118.

⁶⁷⁵ Berger, *Empire*, 119.

Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang grags-pa, 1357-1419).⁶⁷⁶ Ganden was completed in 1409, the same year Tsongkhapa inaugurated the yearly Great Prayer Festival in Lhasa, concluding with the Inviting Maitreya Festival, in which an image of Maitreya is processed around the city, pausing at the cardinal points for the recitation of texts attributed to Maitreya.⁶⁷⁷ The Maitreya festival was celebrated yearly at Yonghegong, starting with the site's inauguration in 1744.

The later inauguration of the Maitreya festival among one of the largest Mongol tribes, the Khalka, was linked to the influential Khalka incarnate lama and political leader Zanabazar (1635-1723, the First Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu of Urga, Mo. *Bogdo Gegen*), a figure who was popularly understood to be a manifestation of Maitreya (although “officially” of the bodhisattva Vajrapani).⁶⁷⁸ As well as being an influential sculptor, he also had a close relationship with the Kangxi emperor. This relationship may have helped to further cement the alliance between the Khalka and the Qing against the encroaching Zunghar empire to the west.⁶⁷⁹ In the Qianlong period, the choice of Maitreya as the subject for the work at Yonghegong was representative of relations between the Qing court, the Mongolian constituencies of the empire, and Gélukpa hierarchs. Furthermore, the medium itself, the immense, twenty-six meter trunk of sandalwood

⁶⁷⁶ Alexander Berzin asserts that name Ganden is in fact the source for the name of the Géluk order, a Tibetan abbreviation of “Ganden Tradition,” but the more common translation of the term is ‘virtuous tradition. He writes: “Since its founding, Ganden has been the seat of the Ganden Tripa (*dGa'-ldan Khri-pa*), the Holder of the Golden Throne of Ganden and head of the Géluk Tradition. This tradition, traced from Tsongkhapa, is also called the Ganden Tradition (*dGa'-ldan lugs*), named after Ganden Monastery. “Luk” means tradition, and “Géluk” is an abbreviation of ‘Ganden Lug.’” Alexander Berzin and Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche II, “A Brief History of Ganden Monastery,” Berzin Archives, 2003, last updated November 21, 2012, <http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/study/history_buddhism/buddhism_tibet/gelug/brief_history_ganden_monastery.html>.

⁶⁷⁷ Berger, *Empire*, 119. The Inviting Maitreya Festival (T. *Byams-pa gDan-'dren*) occurs on the twenty-fifth day of the first month of the Tibetan calendar, just after the Great Prayer Festival (T. *sMon-lam chen-mo*) from the third to the twenty-fourth. For the ritual dates, see Berzin, “Tibetan Astro Sciences.”

⁶⁷⁸ For an overview of Zanabazar and his importance to the Qing court see Berger and Bartholomew, *Mongolia*, 56-71. More detailed biographies of Zanabazar and his successors are found in Charles Bawden, *The Jebtsundamba Khutukhtus of Urga: Text, Translation and Notes* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1961) and Dharmatāla, *Rosary of White Lotuses*.

⁶⁷⁹ For a Tibetan Buddhist understanding of the relationship between Zanabazar and the Kangxi emperor, see Dharmatāla, *Rosary of White Lotuses*, 339-42.

from which the statue was carved, was also deeply symbolic: it was a gift from the Seventh Dalai Lama, sent during a time of political crisis in Tibet.

When news of the emperor's plan to transform Yonghegong into a monastery reached the Seventh Dalai Lama Kelsang Gyatso (1708-1757), he sent the costly and impressive gift of the trunk of sandalwood to the emperor. It was purchased from the Gurkha king in Nepal and transported through Tibet, Sichuan province, up the Yangzi river and the Grand Canal, arriving at Yonghegong in 1747.⁶⁸⁰ This gift was sent at a time of political crisis in Tibet. During his rule in Tibet, Polhanas had made efforts to limit the political influence of the Seventh Dalai Lama, who had been installed in 1721 with the aid of the Kangxi emperor.⁶⁸¹ After Polhanas death in 1747, his son Gyumey Namgyal (T. *Gyur-med-rnam-rgyal*) took power, but rebelled against the Qing.⁶⁸² It was during this critical time that the Seventh Dalai Lama sent the trunk of sandalwood to the emperor. After Gyumey Namgyal was assassinated by Qing *ambans*, or appointed imperial representatives, the Seventh Dalai Lama was given temporal authority in Tibet in 1751.⁶⁸³ This suggests that the Seventh Dalai Lama, responding to the crisis, demonstrated his loyalty to the Qing court in part through this lavish gift, and received the military support of the Qing Empire in return.

Conclusion

This final chapter has analyzed a number of the most prominent sculptural works at Yonghegong, linking them to their religious and political significance, and to the patron of the

⁶⁸⁰ Chen, *Huashuo Yonghegong*, 20. He cites no specific source, but the earliest court record I have found is a Qing court record dated January 27, 1749 (Qianlong 13, 12/9), *Qingdai Yonghegong Dang'an Shiliao*, v. 5. Record 37, 97-98.

⁶⁸¹ Hugh Richardson, *Tibet and its History* (Shambhala, Boston & London, 1984), 48-9.

⁶⁸² Ya Hanzhang, *The Biographies of the Dalai Lamas* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1991), 54-5.

⁶⁸³ Ya, *Biographies*, 65.

site, the Qianlong emperor. Let me briefly review these works with specific reference to the three spheres to make those connections more explicit.

Beginning with the macrocosm, the *Buddhas of the Three Ages* point to the inevitable, cyclic character of the Dharma and the coming of Maitreya as a part of this eternal process, while the *Sixteen Arhats* and their two associates waiting patiently for Maitreya's arrival. In the Hall of the Dharma Wheel, the overt message of the hall's name points to the importance of preaching the Dharma in the spread of enlightenment and the preparing of the world for Maitreya's coming. This message is signified by the "Wheel-turning" mudrā of the last great teacher of the Dharma seen in the *Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*; the teachings themselves as recorded in the Tibetan Buddhist Canon stored in the hall; the monks who regularly populate it, and their Dharma-preserving counterparts, the arhats, seen in the *Mountain of Five Hundred Arhats*. On another level the Dharma Wheel may suggest the central role of the Ākravartin, the Wheel-turning King, in aiding this process. Finally the immanence and imminence of Maitreya is conveyed with sudden and spectacular impact with the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* in the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness that represents the Tuṣita heaven and encloses Maitreya in his bodhisattva state.

The mesocosm broadly includes the multicultural character of many of icons in the axial halls, most of which have significance in both Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism. The clearest example of this is found in the Gate of Harmony and Peace, with the multicultural associations of *Budai Heshang* and the *Four Heavenly Kings*, but the confusion engendered by the identification of the *Sixteen Arhats* is also indicative. The *Buddhas of the Three Ages* provide a link through their Nepali makers to the glories of the Mongol Empire, as well as to the legitimacy of the "Indian style" and "correct" iconometry demanded by the *Sutra of Iconometry*. They also refer back to the Qianlong emperor as *Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*, since Mañjuśrī is also

called “Lord of the Three Ages”. Equally political was the choice of Maitreya Bodhisattva as a subject, one that not only had great significance to the Gélukpa and to the Mongols, but which again refer back to the emperor as Ākravartin. On the level of individual works, mesocosmic associations highlight the relationship of the Qing court to the religio-political elite of Tibet and the political nature of works sent as gifts, such as the *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*, the *Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*, and the massive sandalwood trunk from which the *Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva* was formed. Although not part of the Qianlong emperor’s three spheres, the political value of Yonghegong in more recent times is found not only in the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* but also in the value of works at Yonghegong to highlight the PRC’s political legitimacy in Tibet.

Finally, at the microcosmic level, as if the recurring symbolic reminders of the emperor’s status as universal ruler were not enough, traces of his presence at Yonghegong abound in the many calligraphic inscriptions on display, objects such as the “Third-day Tub”, and the ordination platform that today displays the emperor’s lifelike image.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Architect Arata Isozaki has asserted that “...architectural discourse demands that we view buildings as *events* and not simply as inert objects. In a sense that might be equivalent to grasping the buildings as textual spaces.”⁶⁸⁴ With this view, Isozaki encourages the understanding of an architectural space as a process, a place both for shifting uses and evolving interpretations. Although my interpretation of Yonghegong has proceeded from the idea that the site was “complete” by 1792 as an expression of Qianlong-era imperial universalism, it is also clear from later additions to the site such as the Spirit-summoning Pavilion or the *Colossal Tsongkhapa* that the site was and is a continually evolving “text.”

In this evolution, Yonghegong is quite different from most surviving examples of Qing court architecture, such as the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace or at the Summer Retreat at Chengde. They have always struck me empty stage sets, places frozen in time, designed to cater to a modern interest in the glory days of the High Qing, now that the imperial era is safely domesticated by historical distance and perhaps by the popularity of fictionalized television serials on the High Qing emperors. This historical rewinding is relatively easy at the Forbidden City or at Chengde, where imperial decline and the depredations of the Warlord Era and foreign imperialism can be downplayed. Yet, even the Qing imperial sites held up as cautionary tales are changing. The Yiheyuan’s status as a symbol of Cixi’s corruption and hubris is being overshadowed by discussion of the site as a masterwork of imperial garden design. So too the Yuanmingyuan ruins, still used as an exhortation to resist foreign encroachment, but also being reconstructed in their High Qing splendor in at least two planned full-scale reproductions off site,

⁶⁸⁴ Arata Isozaki, *Japan-ness in Architecture*, trans. David Stewart (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006) ix.

and their emptiness being given form in a digital recreation to be accessed through viewers or smartphones on the original grounds.⁶⁸⁵

Yonghegong is different. It has been a part of the fabric of Beijing life for centuries. During the imperial era, yearly rituals such as the distribution of *labazhou* gruel, and later the *dagui*, or *cham*, dances made the monastery somewhat accessible to the public, but with the fall of the Qing, the site began to evolve as a public religious site, interrupted only by the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Unlike the other Qing sites that have been returned to their eighteenth-century glory, or like the Tibetan Buddhist shrines in the Forbidden City that seem to have been sealed up since then, Yonghegong has changed in form and function, developing in a much more lively fashion.

It is perhaps ironic, then, that one of the main goals of this study was to recover the eighteenth-century imperial character of Yonghegong. Although I might also be guilty of privileging the High Qing, in the case of Yonghegong a fundamental level of meaning had been hiding in plain sight: the extremely close connections of the site to the Qing imperial family, and the unifying, underlying message of imperial universalism that could still be found there if one knew to look for it. Patricia Berger's brief overview in *Empire of Emptiness* brought it back to center stage. Perhaps due to the accessibility and to the continuing religious practice at the site, most studies had discussed it strictly as a Tibetan Buddhist monastic college, with the spaces, icons and practices there seen as geared toward that function. While it might be easy to argue that the very detailed previous comprehensive studies that deemphasized the imperial

⁶⁸⁵ One reconstruction is the "New Yuanming Palace" (*Yuanmingxinyuan* 圆明新园) in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province; the other more controversial project, seemingly stalled over corruption charges and public protest, is in Zhejiang Province near the Hengdian World Studios. See Ma Zhenhuan, "Official Censured for Power Abuse," *China Daily*, April 10, 2009, < http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2009-04/10/content_7664007.htm>. For the digital reconstruction, see Chen Jia, "Palace Site Offers Virtual Glimps of the Past," *China Daily*, September 20, 2010, < http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/2010-09/20/content_11328186.htm>.

universalist symbolism at Yonghegong may have missed the forest for the trees, at a site as complex as Yonghegong there is not a single interpretive forest. Recovering the imperial significance of Yonghegong is simply another way of understanding an important part of the original intention of the patron and interpreting some of the recurring symbols in the art and architecture still in place.

My interpretation in this study of the language of imperial universalism at Yonghegong depended on a heuristic device: the three spheres that helped to divide and conquer the interwoven messages of the site. In my view, the value of this model is twofold: first, as noted, it can help to deepen understanding of Yonghegong by drawing attention to overlooked meanings and associations in the symbolic program. Second, it can connect this vitally important but under-appreciated site to broader, interdisciplinary studies of the theme of imperial universalism widely propagated during the Qianlong era. Although I have been careful to limit the three spheres to Yonghegong, a place where the physical presence of the emperor, his political legitimacy, and his millennial mission are all so clearly represented together, this model may have wider utility. The three spheres suggest that various possible meaning for a specific symbol be considered by a scholar interpreting any production or act of the Qianlong court. For example, although the historically rare and well-known abdication of the Qianlong emperor is usually validated in Confucian terms, the abdication of the *śakravartin* *Dalhanemi* in the “The Lion’s Roar on the Turning of the Wheel” sutra detailed in Chapter Three might provide a further Buddhist justification for the emperor’s action.⁶⁸⁶

These are reasons why Yonghegong should be studied, but another important question is why the site has *not* been studied, given its physical and historical prominence. I have already

⁶⁸⁶ The justification most often cited is the emperor’s filial wish not to reign longer than his grandfather, the Kangxi Emperor, as well as the ancient precedent of Yao abdicating to Shun. For an overview of the history of imperial abdication and its relation to the Qianlong emperor, see Kahn, *Monarchy*, 200-30.

detailed the complexities of the site, challenges that I feel demand a multidisciplinary approach. Editor Niu Song's *Yonghegong*, with the contributions of numerous scholars, is an important step towards that, and, along with the earlier work by Jin Liang, help to provide a general overview. However, those works were based entirely on Chinese sources, and were therefore limited to that perspective. The multilingual character of the material at the site is a significant challenge and opportunity, but few scholars have the linguistic skills of Luo Wenhua. I hope that future work on Yonghegong manages the multidisciplinary and linguistic challenges of the site through smaller, more focused studies, such as Lai and Chang's economic analysis. As this dissertation has shown, a tremendous amount of basic research is needed, from firmer dating of the sculptures and paintings, to annotated studies of the inscriptions, to evidence for specific ritual practices at the site in the eighteenth century, among other subjects.

In introducing the site, I described the generally negative reactions to Yonghegong and Tibetan Buddhism among Westerners in the early twentieth century, attitudes to which Bouillard and Lessing were notable exceptions. Today a fascinating reversal has occurred, but one that may also inhibit serious study of the site. Tibetan Buddhism in the West has become much more widely respected, due primarily to the efforts of not only academic studies but also exiled Tibetan Buddhist teachers, their Western students, and the international fame of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. However, the historical events that precipitated the exile of these Tibetans and many others have led to a sharp division over the issue of Tibet. Completely antithetical Chinese and Western world views have been created in what John Powers has described as a "clash of myths" over the history of Tibet and its relationship with China.⁶⁸⁷ It is a problem fraught with strong emotional responses from both sides. At a site as prominent and popular as Yonghegong,

⁶⁸⁷ John Powers, *History as Propaganda: Tibetan Exiles versus the People's Republic of China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.

situated in the political center of the People's Republic of China, a clear arena exists for displaying the government's support for minority groups and their cultural practices, and for presenting historical support for China's assertions of legitimate authority in Tibet. However, the propaganda value of the site may have had a negative effect on Western visitors and academics who might see Yonghegong as a 'red, bright and shining' tourist attraction, a "Potemkin Monastery" unworthy of serious investigation.

Of course, the reality of the site is far more complex. Despite what may be viewed as the politically expedient support and use of Yonghegong by the PRC government, it has blossomed into an active hub of religious life, reflecting the recent rise of Chinese practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism, as well the increasing popularity of the site as a more generalized religious center.⁶⁸⁸ Ultimately, Yonghegong continues to exist as it always has: a place of intertwining political, religious and personal meanings, not just for an emperor but for millions of visitors today.

⁶⁸⁸ See David Eimer, "Prayer Wheels," *South China Morning Post*, November 6, 2006, <<http://www.scmp.com/node/570486>>; also "Anxiety Sends Chinese to Temples as College Exam Nears," *People's Daily Online*, June 5, 2008, <<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90781/6425041.html>>.

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Appendix 1: The Outer Mandala

Each courtyard is designated by a Roman numeral, following the Melchers plan, and is named for its axial building or most prominent structure, following Niu. In my designation system, axial buildings are listed first, designated with numbers, and then subsidiary buildings are listed, designated with upper case letters. Subsidiary buildings are listed first east then west, moving north. Other structures within each courtyard are designated with lowercase letters. My English translation of the name of the hall appears first, followed by the Chinese name, then any alternative names. Dates indicate date completed, and, where appropriate, date removed. Finally, although I do not use the building numbering system from the Melchers plan, the Melchers designations are provided in brackets for ease in referencing the Melchers plan.

The Imperial Periphery

No Longer Extant

Eastern Academy (*Dongshuyuan* 東書院) (1694, damaged 1900, removed ca. 1950s)

The Temple of Emperor Guan (*Guandimiao* 關帝廟). (Ca. 1750, removed after 1940s)
[Melchers, Courtyards IX and X, Halls 12 and 13]

Prefatory Courtyard

Courtyard I: Pailou Courtyard, or Courtyard of Ceremonial Gateways (*Pailouyuan* 牌樓院)

The Three Pailou (1744)

- a. East Pailou (1744)
- b. North Pailou (1744)
- c. West Pailou (1744)

No Longer Extant

The Great Stage Tower (*Daxilou* 大戲樓), formerly on the south end of the courtyard.

The Spirit-summoning Pavilion (*Zhaohunting* 招魂亭), formerly at the southeast corner of the courtyard. (1900-1950s)

The Garden Section

Courtyard II: Courtyard of the Imperial Carriage Way (*Niandaoyuan* 輦道院)

Monastic Dormitories (*Lianfang* 連房)

Khutukhtu Residences (*Focang* 佛倉)

The Palace Section

Courtyard III: Courtyard of the Gate of Harmony and Peace
(*Yonghemenyuan* 雍和門院)

Hall 1: Gate of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghemmen* 雍和門) or Hall of Heavenly Kings
(*Tianwangdian* 天王殿) (1694) [Melchers 1]

Other Structures:

- a. Gate of Luminous Peace (*Zhaotaimen* 昭泰門)
- b. Bell Tower (1744)
- c. Drum Tower (1744)
- d. Eastern Octagonal Stele Pavilion (1744)
- e. Western Octagonal Stele Pavilion (1744)
- f. Eastern Administration Buildings (Formerly Khutukhtu Residences)

Courtyard IV: Courtyard of the Palace of Harmony and Peace
(*Yonghegongyuan* 雍和宮院)

Hall 2: Palace of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghegong* 雍和宮, or *Yonghegong zhengdian* 雍和宮正殿) (1694) [Melchers 3]

Other Structures:

- a. *Lamashuo* Stele Pavilion (*Lamashuo paiting* 喇嘛說牌亭), or Four Scripts Stele Pavilion (*Siti paiting* 四體牌亭) (1792)

Courtyard V: Courtyard of the Hall of Eternal Protection
(*Yongyoudianyuan* 永佑殿院)

Hall 3: Hall of Eternal Protection (*Yongyoudian* 永佑殿) (1694) [Melchers 5]

Palace Section Subsidiary Halls

The Four Study Halls (*Sixuedian* 四學殿) (Overlapping Courtyards IV and V)

Hall A: Esoteric Hall (*Mizongdian* 密宗殿) (1744) [Melchers 2]

Hall B: Exoteric Hall, or Lecture Hall (*Jiangjingdian* 講經殿) (1744) [Melchers 16]

Hall C: Medicine Master Hall (*Yaoshidian* 藥師殿) (1744) [Melchers 4]

Hall D: Wheel of Time Hall or Kālacakra Hall (*Shilundian* 時輪殿), or
Mathematics Hall (*Shuxuedian* 數學殿) (1744) [Melchers 15]

The Plateau Section

Courtyard VI: Courtyard of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel
(*Falundianyuan* 法輪殿院)

Hall 4: Hall of the Dharma Wheel (*Falundian* 法輪殿) (1744) [Melchers 7]

Hall E: Eastern Side Hall (*Dongpeidian* 東配殿) (1744) [Melchers 6]

Hall F: Western Side Hall (*Xipeidian* 西配殿) (1744) [Melchers 14]

Hall G: Ordination Platform Tower (*Jietailou* 戒臺樓) (1780)

Hall H: Panchen Tower (*Banchanlou* 班禪樓) (1780)

Courtyard VII: Courtyard of the Pavilion of Infinite Happiness
(*Wanfugeyuan* 萬福閣院)

Hall 5: Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (*Wanfuge* 萬福閣) (1750) [Melchers 9]

Hall 5a: (East) Pavilion of Eternal Health (*Yongkangge* 永康閣) (1750)

Hall 5b: (West) Pavilion of Prolonged Peace (*Yansuige* 延綏閣) (1750)

Hall I: Yamāntaka Tower (*Yamandagalou* 雅曼達嘎) (ca. 1750) [Melchers 11]

Hall J: Tower of the Buddha's Reflection (*Zhaofolou* 照佛樓) (ca. 1750)
[Melchers 8]

Courtyard VIII: Courtyard of the Tower of Complete Pacification
(*Suichenglouyuan* 綏成樓院)

Hall K: Eastern Mountain-according Tower (*Dongshunshanlou* 東順山樓)

Hall L: Tower of Complete Pacification (*Suichenglou* 綏成樓)

Hall M: Western Mountain-according Tower (*Xishunshanlou* 西順山樓)

Appendix 2: The Inner Mandala

This appendix only lists the major icons of the axial halls at Yonghegong discussed in this dissertation. For a more comprehensive listing, including icons of the subsidiary halls, see Niu (2001) or Jin (1994).

Hall 1: Gate of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghemen* 雍和門) or Hall of Heavenly Kings (*Tianwangdian* 天王殿) (1694) [Melchers 1]

a. ***Budai Heshang*** 布袋和尚. Gilded wood; probably 18th century, measurements unavailable. (Fig. 20)

b. ***The Four Heavenly Kings*** (*Si tianwang* 四天王). Painted clay; dates and measurements unavailable.

[SE] ***Vaiśravaṇa***, Heavenly King of the North (Fig. 21)
(C. *Duowentian* 多聞天, “The All-Hearing”;
T. *rnam thos sras*; “Son of He who has Heard Many Things”)

[NE] ***Virupākṣa***, Heavenly King of the West (Fig. 22)
(C. *Guangmutian* 廣目天, “The All-Seeing”;
T. *spyān mi bzang*; “Ugly Eyes”)

[SW] ***Virūḍhaka***, Heavenly King of the South (Fig. 23)
(C. *Zengzhangtian* 增長天, “The Expander”;
T. *'phags skyes po*, “Noble Birth”)

[NW] ***Dhṛtarāṣṭra***, Heavenly King of the East (Fig. 24)
(C. *Chiguotian* 持國天, “The Maintainer of the State”;
T. *yul 'khor srung* “The Defender of the Area”)

c. ***Skanda*** (*Weito* 韋馱). Gilded wood; probably eighteenth century, measurements unavailable.

Hall 2: Palace of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghegong* 雍和宮) (1694) [Melchers 3]

a. ***Buddhas of the Three Ages*** (*Sanshifo* 三世佛, T. *dus gsum sangs rgyas*). 1747.
Bronze, painted and gilded; 2.4 m each.

[East] ***Maitreya Buddha*** (*Milefo* 彌勒佛; T. *byams pa*) (Fig. 28)

[Center] ***Śākyamuni Buddha*** (*Shijiamunifo* 釋迦牟尼佛; T. *sangs rgyas sha kya thub pa*) (Fig. 29)

Flanking Śākyamuni

(West) **Ānanda** (*A'nan* 阿難; T. *kun dga' bo*). Bronze, painted and gilded; 1.7 meters.

(East) **Mahākāśyapa** (*Mohejiaye* 摩訶迦葉; T. *'od srung chen po*). Bronze, painted and gilded; 1.7 meters.

[West] **Dīpaṅkara Buddha** (*Randengfo* 燃燈佛; T. *mar me mzad*) (Fig. 30)

- b. **The Sixteen Arhats** (*Shiliu luohan* 十六羅漢; T. *gnas brtan bcu drug*), 1747.
Hollow painted sackcloth (*zimatuosha* 紫麻脫沙), each ca. 155 cm. (Fig. 31)

Note: This list presents the *Sixteen Arhats* at Yonghegong identified by their Tibetan iconography and ordered accordingly. The list begins in the northwest, designated W1, and proceeds west to east, north to south alternating, i.e. W1, E1, W2, E2. Sanskrit transliteration follows Clark, 292-297. At Yonghegong and in Yonghegong publications, the arhats are identified according to the Chinese Buddhist order, and numbered north to south, first on the west side then on the east. These alternate names and their order are provided in brackets for reference.

1. W1 **Aṅgaja** (*Injieta* 因竭陀; T. *yan lag jung*) (Fig. 32)
[1. Subinda (?), *Supintuo* 蘇頻陀]
2. E1 **Ajita** (*Ashiduo* 阿氏多; T. *ma pham pa*) (Fig. 33)
[10. Panthaka, *Bantuojia* 半托迦]
3. W2 **Vaṇavāsīn** (*Fanaposi* 伐那婆斯; T. *nags na gnas*) (Fig. 34)
[2. Nakula, *Nuojuluo* 諾距羅]
4. E2 **Kālīka** (*Jialijia* 迦裏迦; T. *dus ldan*) (Fig. 35)
[11. Rāhula, *Luoguluo* 羅沽羅]
5. W3 **Vajrīputra** (*Fasheluofoduo* 伐闍羅佛多; T. *rdo rje mo'i bu*) (Fig. 36)
[3. Bhadra, *Batuoluo* 跋陀羅]
6. E3 **Bhadra** (*Batuoluo* 跋陀羅; T. *bzang po*) (Fig. 37)
[12. Nagasena, *Najiaina* 那迦犀那]
7. W4 **Kaṇakavatsa** (*Jianuojiafacuo* 迦諾迦伐蹉; T. *gser be'u*) (Fig. 38)
[4. Pindolabharadvāja, *Binduluobaluoduoshe* 賓度羅跋羅墮闍]

8. E4 **Kanakabharadvāja** (*Jianuojiaboliduoshe* 迦諾迦跋黎墮闍; T. *bha ra dhva dza gser can*) (Fig. 39)
[13. Angaja, *Yinjietuo* 因竭陀]
 9. W5 **Bakula** (*Bagula* 巴沽拉; T. *ba ku la*) (Fig. 40)
[5. Kanakavatsa, *Jianuojiafacuo* 迦諾迦伐蹉]
 10. E5 **Rāhula** (*Luoguluo* 羅沽羅; T. *sgra gcan 'dzin*) (Fig. 41)
[14. Vanavāsin, *Fanaposi* 伐那婆斯]
 11. W6 **Cūḍapanthaka** (*Zhuchabantuo* 注茶半托; T. *lam phran bstan*) (Fig. 42)
[6. Kanakabharadvāja, *Jianuojiaboliduoshe* 迦諾迦跋厘憍闍]
 12. E6 **Piṇḍolabharadvāja** (*Binduluobaluoduo* 賓度羅跋羅墮; T. *bha ra dhva dza bsod snyoms len*) (Fig. 43)
[15. Ajita, *Ashiduo* 阿氏多]
 13. W7 **Panthaka** (*Bantuojia* 半托迦; T. *lam bstan*) (Fig. 44)
[7. Kālīka, *Jialijia* 迦理迦]
 14. E7 **Nāgasena** (*Najiaksi* 那迦犀; T. *klu'i sde*) (Fig. 45)
[16. Cūḍapanthaka, *Zhuchabantuojia* 注茶半托迦]
 15. W8 **Gopaka** (*Jiebojia* 戒博迦; T. *sbed byed*) (Fig. 46)
[8. Vajrīputra, *Fasheluofoduo* 伐闍羅弗多羅]
 16. E8 **Abheda** (*Abite* 阿秘特; T. *mi phyed pa*) (Fig. 47)
[17. Kāśyapa, *Jiaye* 迦葉]
 17. W9 **Upāsaka Hvashang** (*Budai Heshang* 布袋和尚; T. *hwa shang*) (Fig. 48)
[9. Supaka, *Xubojia* 戌博迦]
 18. E9 **Upāsaka Dharmatala** (*Damoduoluo* 達摩多羅; T. *ge nyen dhar ma ta*) (Fig. 49)
[18. No Sanskrit provided. *Juntubotan* 軍屠鉢嘆]
- c. **Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara** (*Yonghegong Luojishuolifo* 雍和宮羅吉碩哩佛). Ca. 1745. White sandalwood, figure 93 cm, lotus base and back-support 101 cm. (Fig. 107)

Hall 3: Hall of Eternal Protection (*Yongyoudian* 永佑殿) (1694) [Melchers 5]

- a. ***Buddhas of Longevity*** (Probably eighteenth century, white sandalwood, 2.35 m each)
 - i. [West] ***Medicine Master*** Buddha (*Yaoshifo* 藥師殿)
 - ii. [Center] ***Amitāyus*** Buddha (*Wuliangshoufo* 無量壽佛)
 - iii. [East] Simhanada Buddha (*Shihoufo* 獅吼佛, T. *rgyal-ba seng-gehi ngaro*)

Hall 4: Hall of the Dharma Wheel (*Falundian* 法輪殿) (1744) [Melchers 7]

- a. ***Colossal Tsongkhapa*** (*Zongkaba* 宗喀巴; T. *tsong kha pa*). Ca. 1917, installed ca. 1924-5. Gilded copper, 6.1 m. (Fig. 56)
- b. ***Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*** (*Poluonai Shijiamounifo xiang* 頗羅鼎釋迦牟尼佛像). Early Qing (?). Statue: gilded copper; 40 cm. Throne: bronze, 22 cm. Back-support, 110 cm. Sumeru-throne platform: wood, 24 cm. (Fig. 112)

Hall 5. Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (*Wanfuge* 萬福閣) (1750) [Melchers 9]

- a. ***Colossal Maitreya Bodhisattva*** (C. *Milepusa* 彌勒菩薩; T. *Byams pa mgon po*; Mo. *Maidari*; Ma. *Maidari fusa*) (1750) Gilded sandalwood, 18 m above ground, 8 m underground. (Fig. 61)

Illustrations

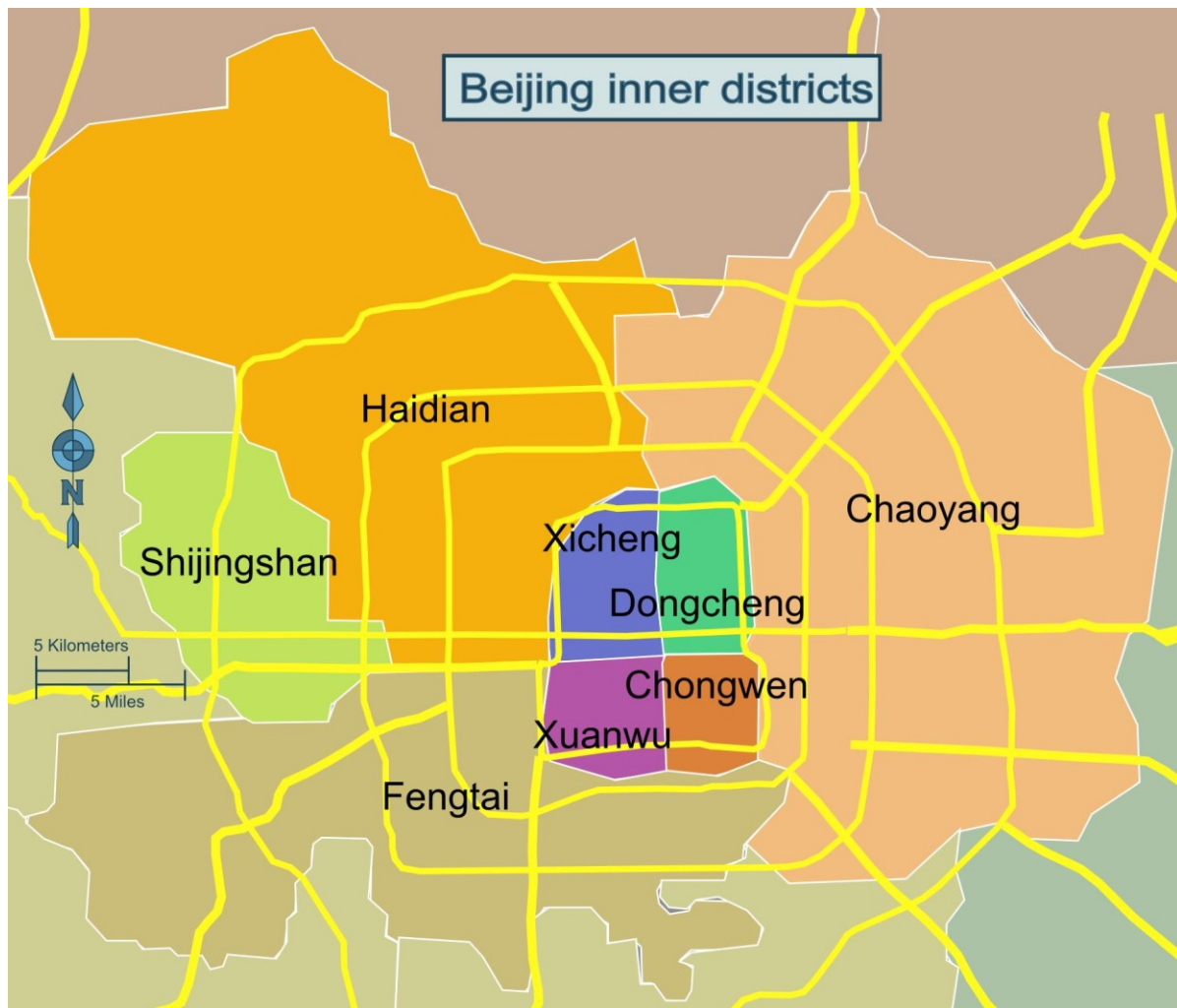
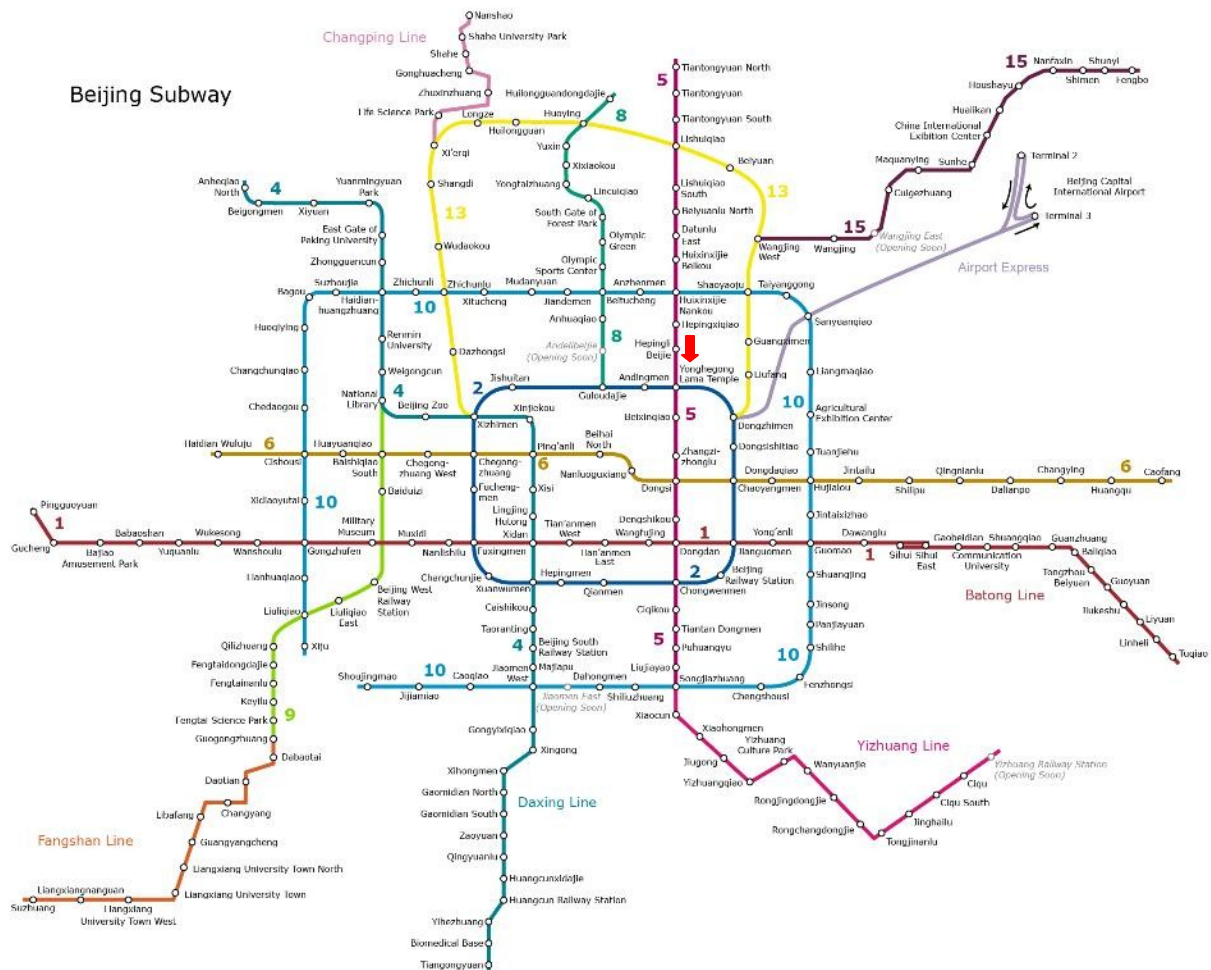


Figure 1: Map of the inner districts of Beijing. Claus Hansen.
<<http://wikitravel.org/en/File:BeijingInnerDistricts.png>>. Accessed March 1, 2013.



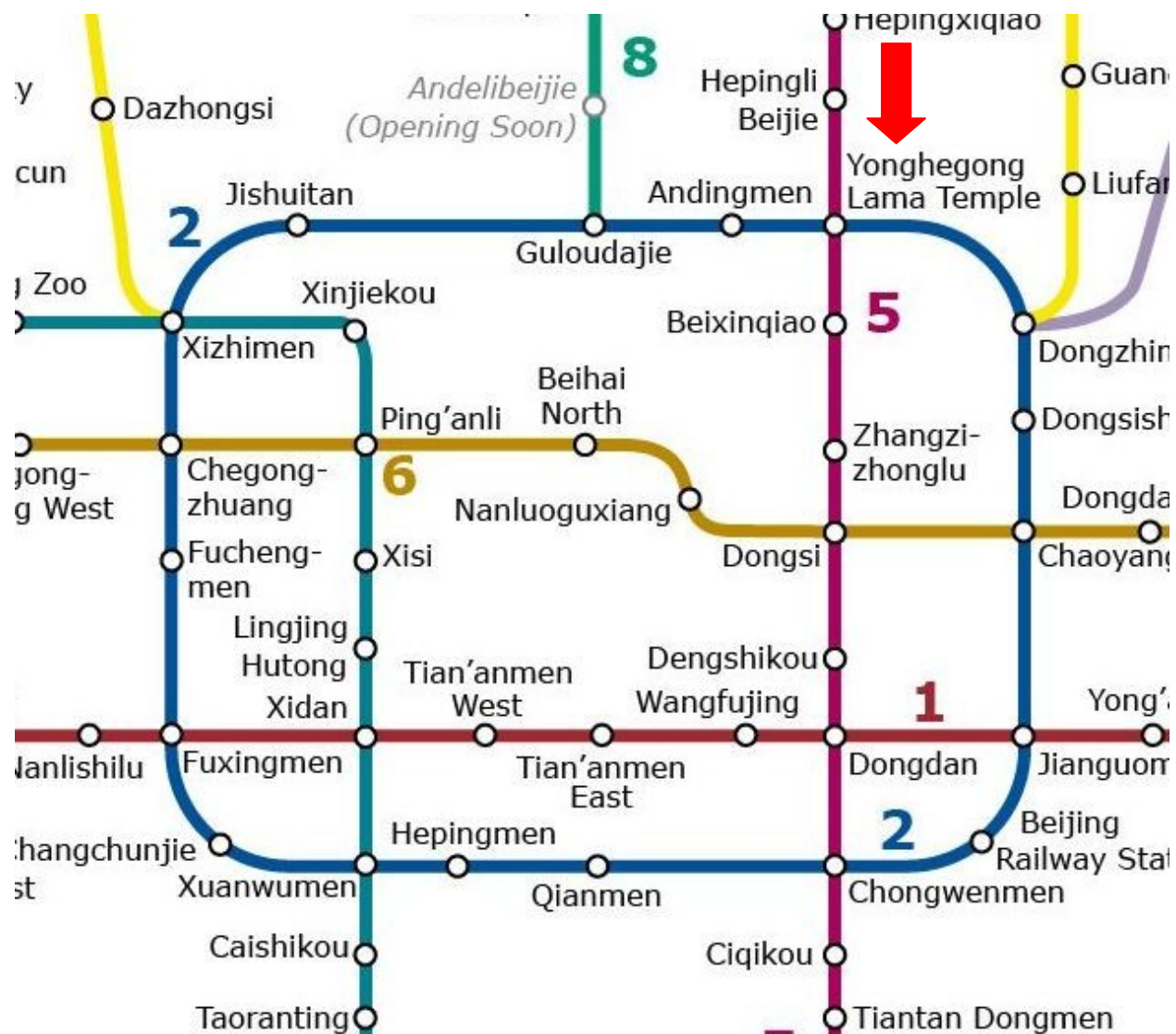


Figure 2b. Detail of Fig. 2, Arrow added to indicate Yonghegong station.



Figure 3: Exit sign in Yonghegong subway station. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 4: Yonghegong subway station entrance. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 5: Pavilion of Infinite Happiness. From Nancy S. Steinhardt, ed. *Chinese Architecture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. Figure 7.75, 328.

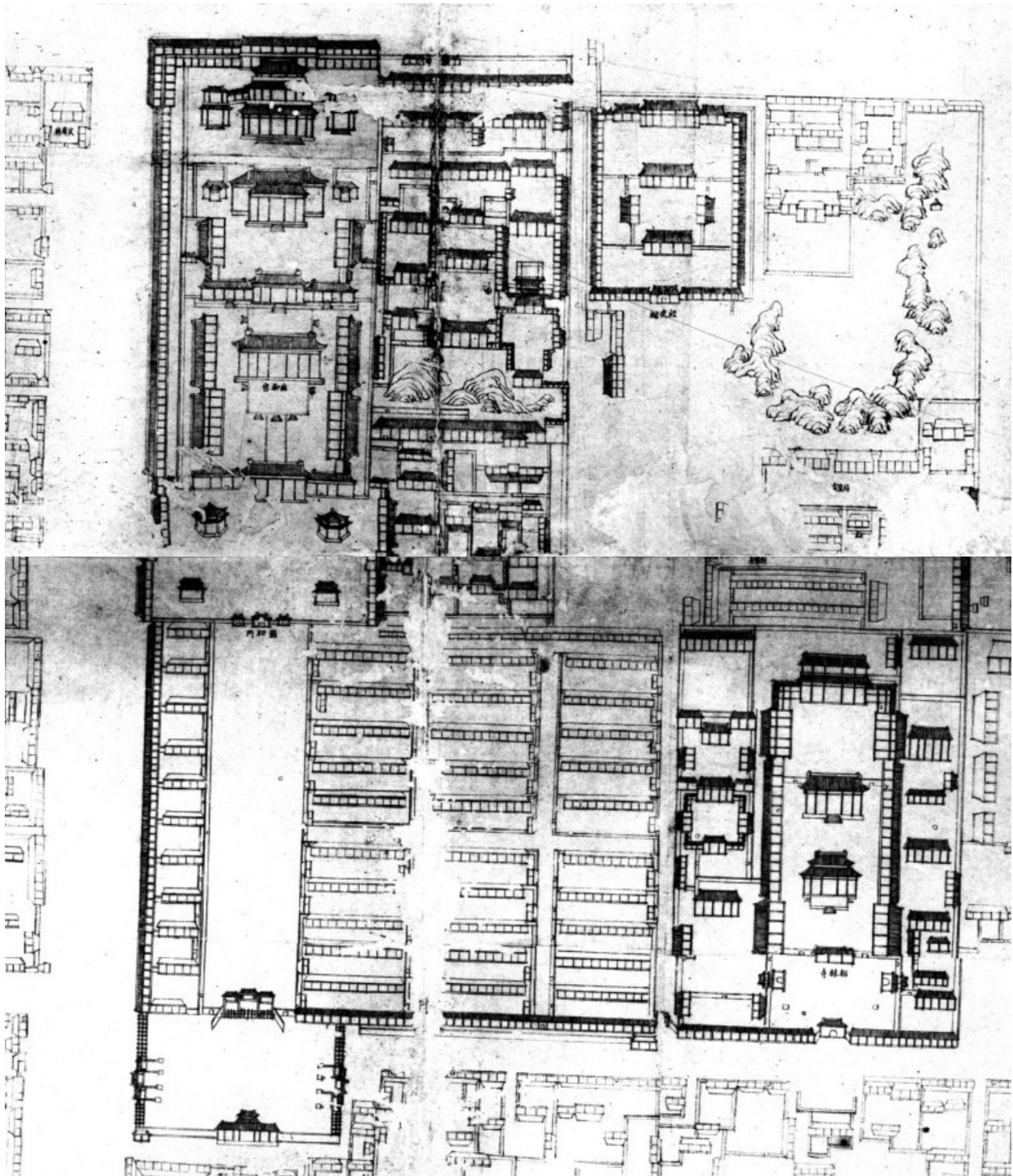


Figure 6: Detail of “Qianlong Period Complete Map of the Capital” (*Qianlong jingcheng quantu* 乾隆京城全圖), 1750. The National Institute of Informatics Digital Silk Road Project Digital Archive of Toyo Bunko Rare Books. < <http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/II-11-D-802/>>

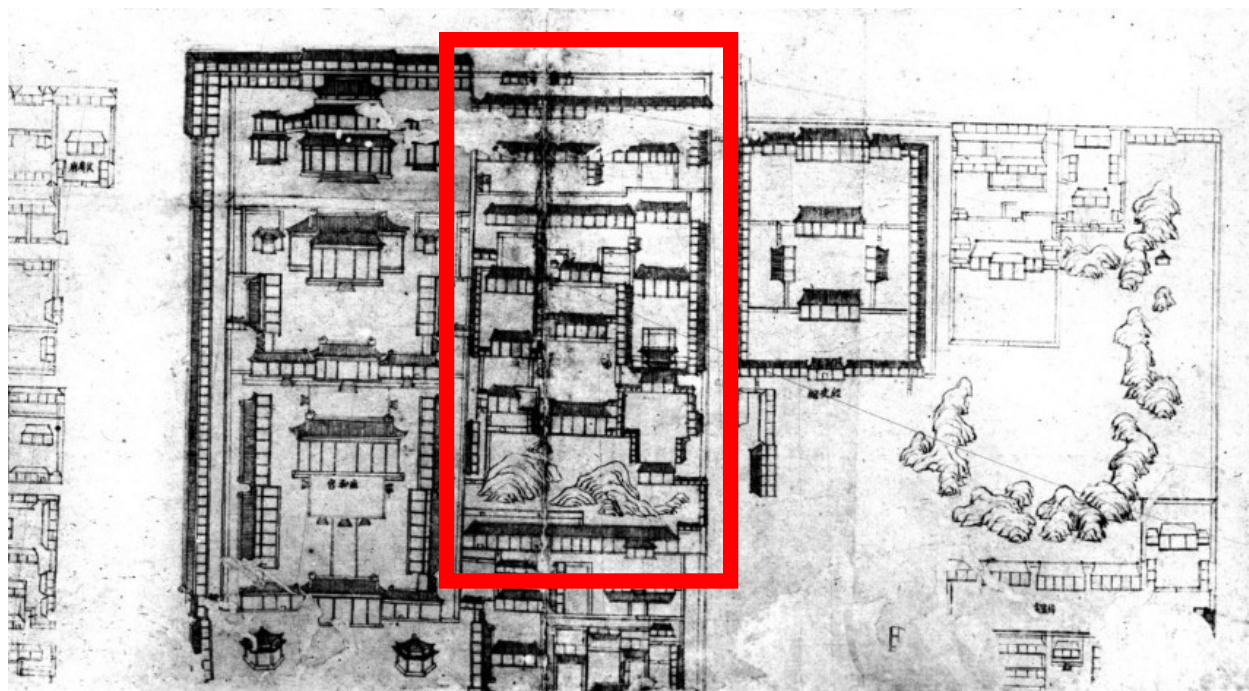


Figure 7: Detail of Fig. 6, with Eastern Academy outlined in red.

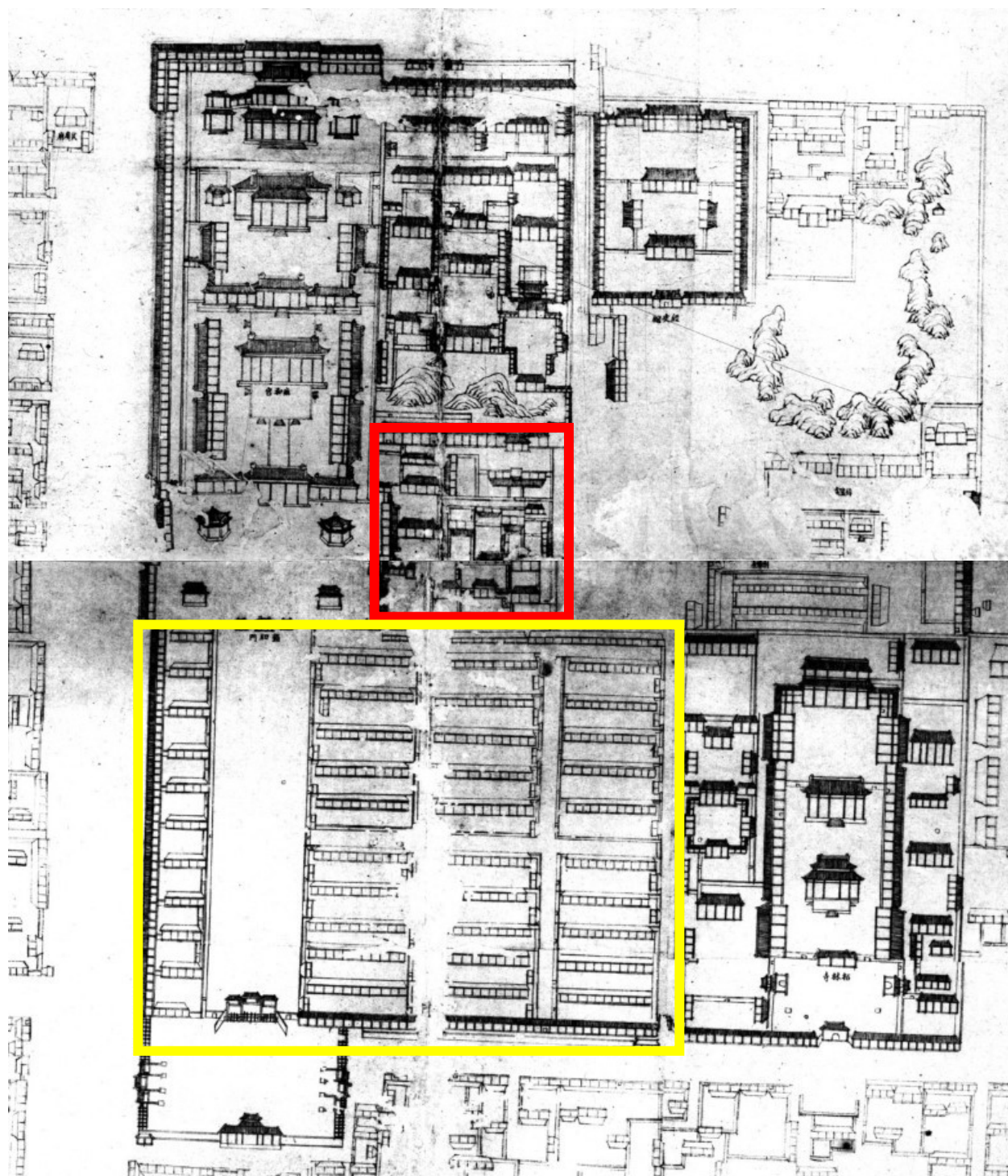


Figure 8: Fig. 6, with khutukhtu residences outlined in red and monastic dormitories outlined in yellow.

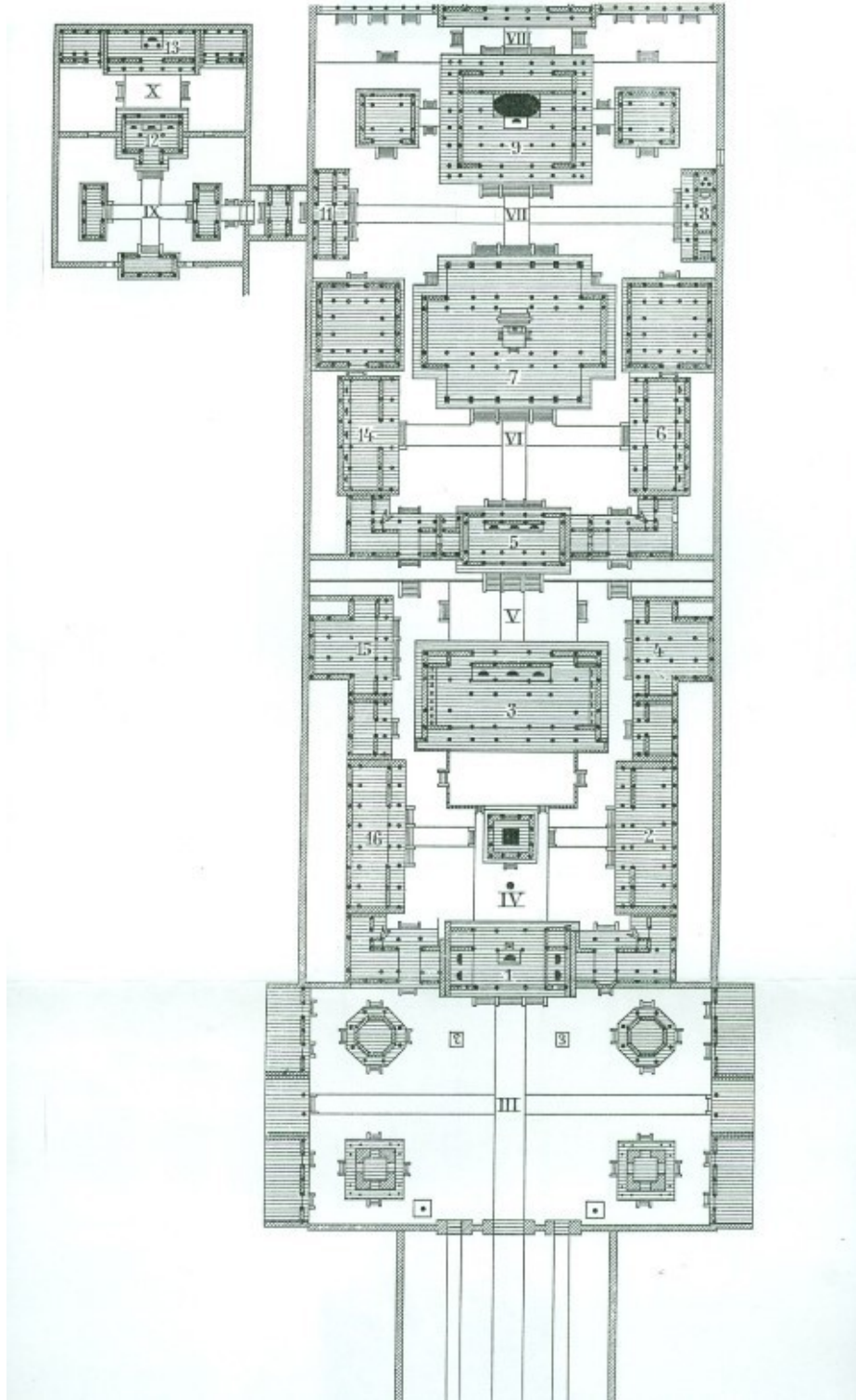


Figure 9a: Plan of Yonghegong by Bern Melchers, north section. Lessing, Ferdinand, and Gösta Montell. *Yung-ho-kung, an Iconography of the Lamaist Cathedral in Peking, with Notes on Lamaist Mythology and Cult*, Volume One. Stockholm, 1942. N.p.

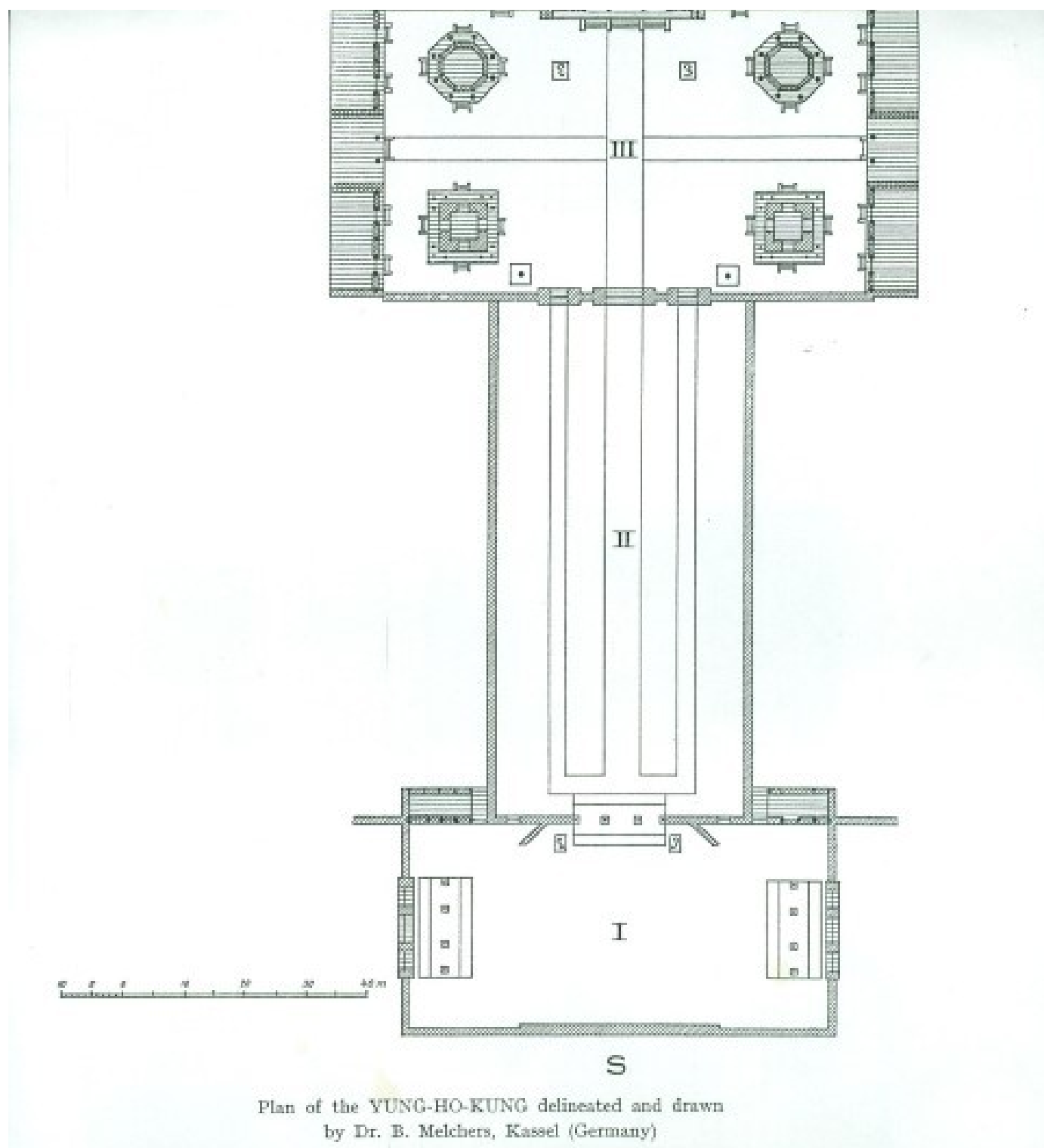


Fig. 9b. Melchers plan, south section.

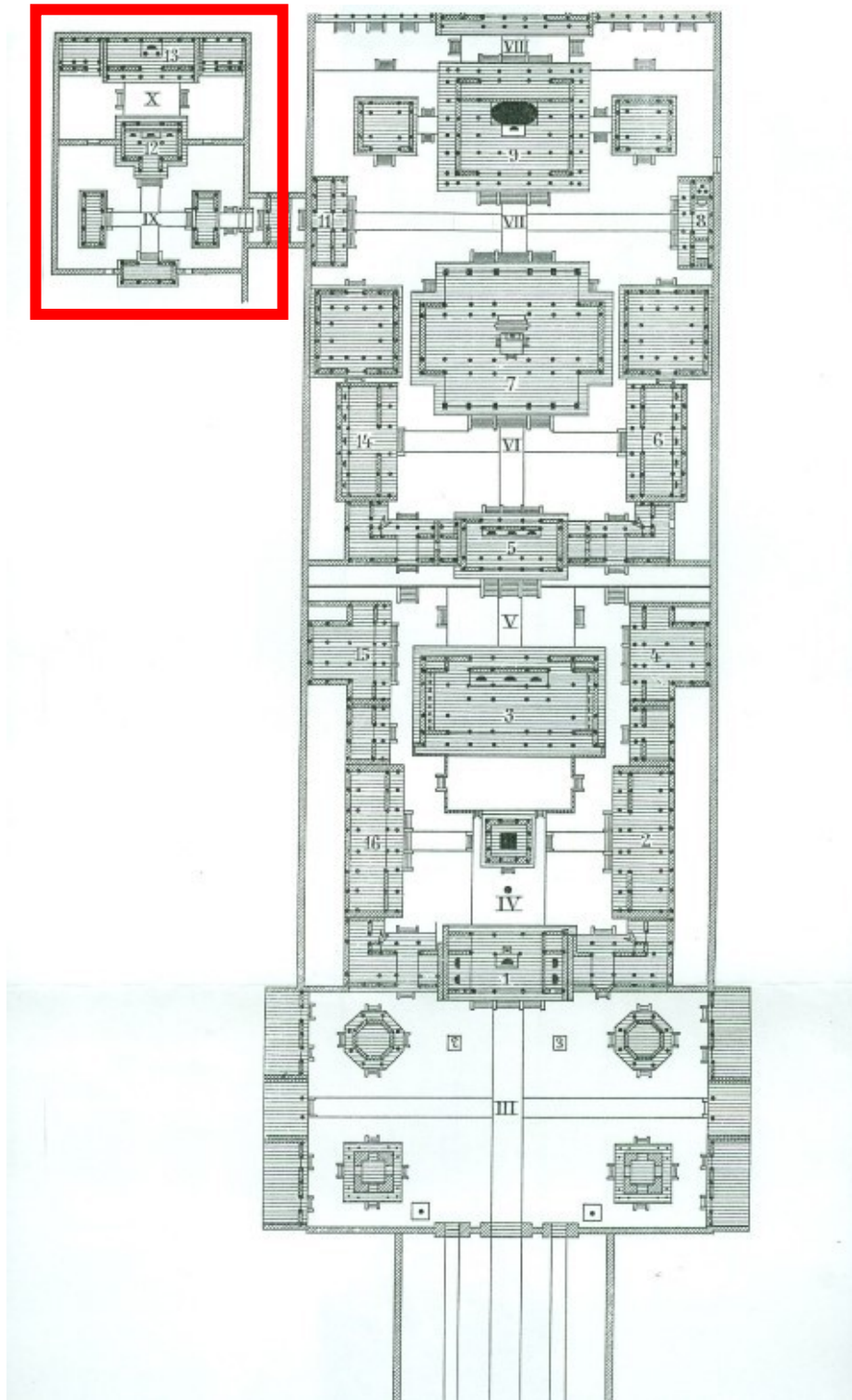


Figure 10: Melchers plan from Fig. 9, with Temple to Guandi outlined in red.



Figure 11: North Pailou from the Courtyard of Ceremonial Gateways (*Pailouyuan* 牌楼院, Courtyard I). From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 12.



Figure 12: Courtyard of the Imperial Carriageway (*Niandaoyuan* 辇道院, Courtyard II). Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 13: Courtyard of the Imperial Carriageway (*Niandaoyuan* 辇道院, Courtyard II). Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 14: Gate of Luminous Peace (*Zhaotaimen* 昭泰門). Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



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Figure 17: Bell tower, looking south. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 18: East Octagonal Stele Pavilion, looking north. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 19: Gate of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghemmen* 雍和門). Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



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Figure 23: *Virūdhaka*, Heavenly King of the South. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 24.



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Figure 25: *Skanda*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 23.



Figure 26: Palace of Harmony and Peace (*Yonghegong* 雍和宮). From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 34.

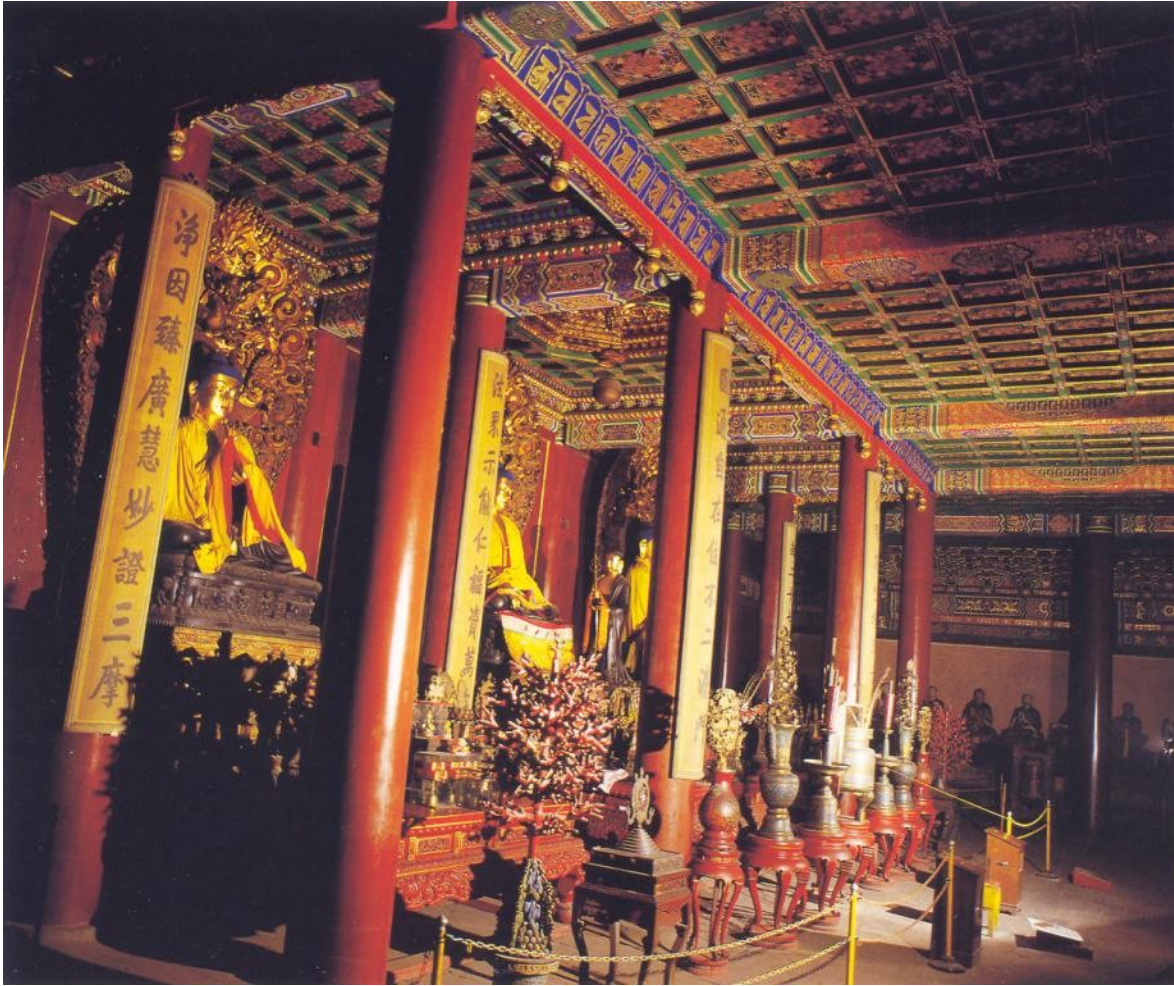


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Figure 29: *Śākyamuni Buddha*, with *Mahākāśyapa* (right) and *Ānanda* (left). From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 40.



Figure 30: *Dīpaṃkara Buddha*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 41.



Figure 31: *The Sixteen Arhats*, west side of hall. From Wang Shu, ed. *Lamasery of Harmony and Peace*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2002. 15.

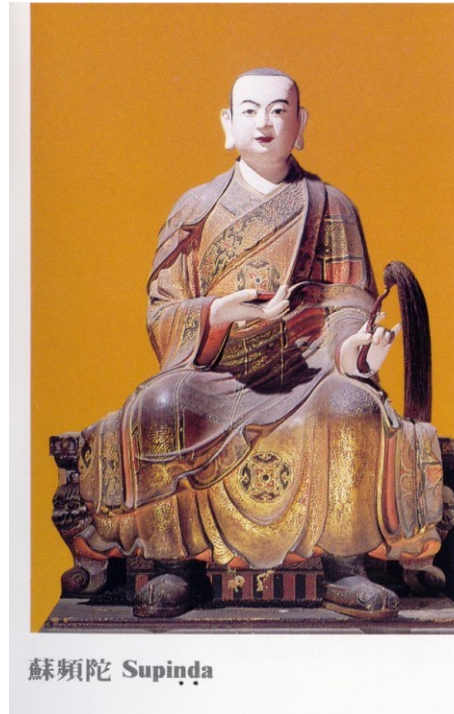


Figure 32: *Angaja*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 43.

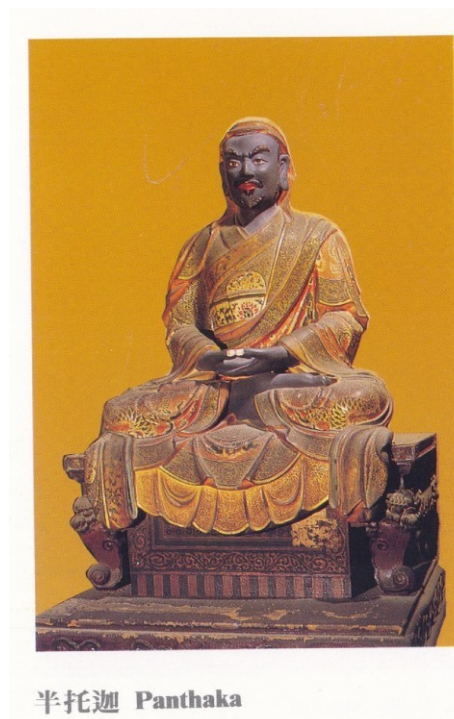
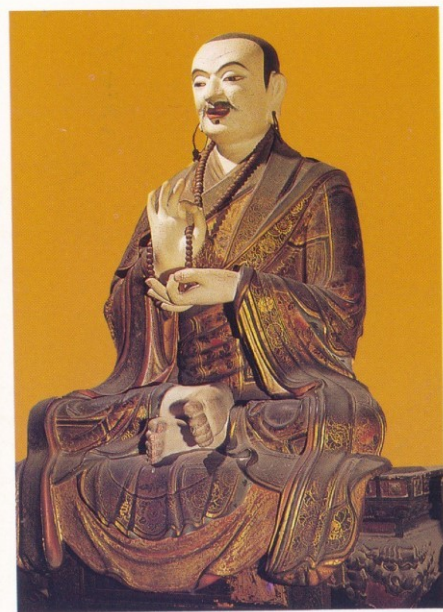


Figure 33: *Ajita*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 44.



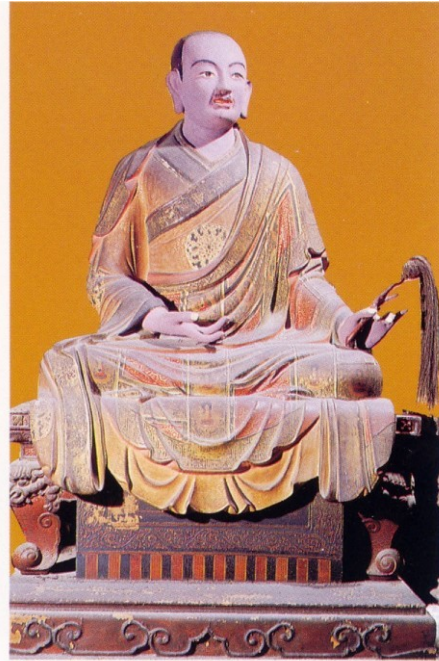
諾鉅羅 Nakula

Figure 34: *Vaṇavāsin*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 43.



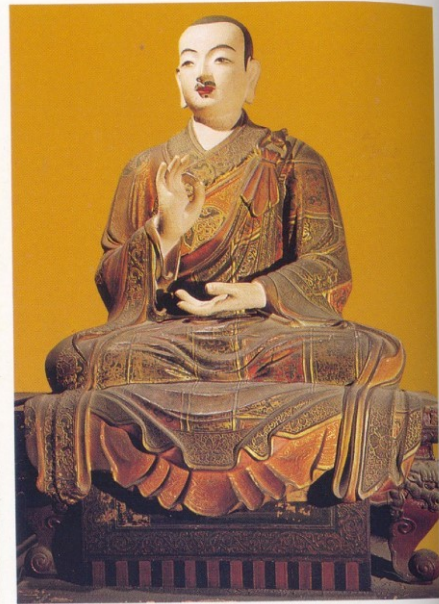
羅睺羅 Rāhula

Figure 35: *Kālika*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 44.



跋陀羅 Bhadra

Figure 36: *Vajrīputra*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 43.



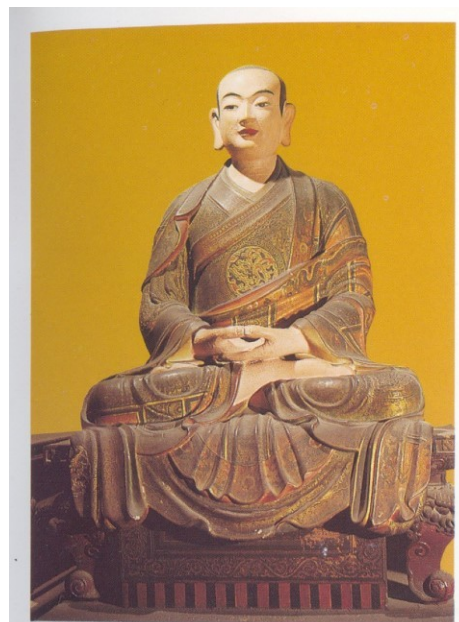
那迦犀那 Nāgasena

Figure 37: *Bhadra*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 44.

賓度羅跋情闍 Pindolabhāradvaja



Figure 38: *Kaṇakavatsa*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 42.



因揭陀 Ingata

Figure 39: *Kanakabharadvāja*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 45.

迦諾迦伐蹉 Kanakavatsa

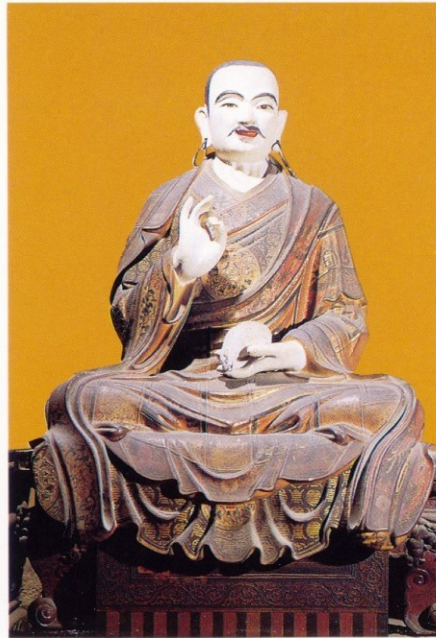
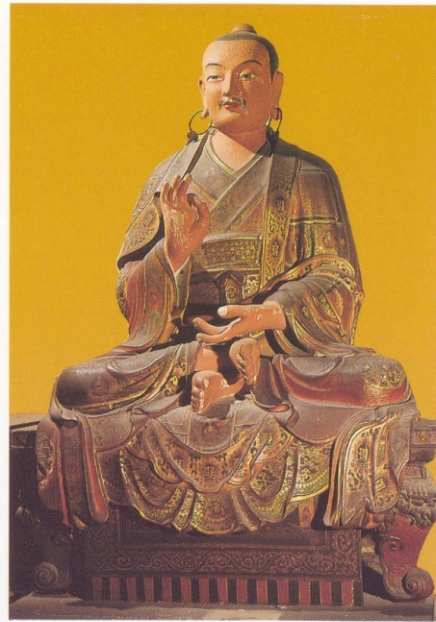


Figure 40: *Bakula*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 42.



伐那婆斯 Vanavāsin

Figure 41: *Rāhula*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 45.

迦諾迦跋厘憍闍 Kanakabhāradvāja

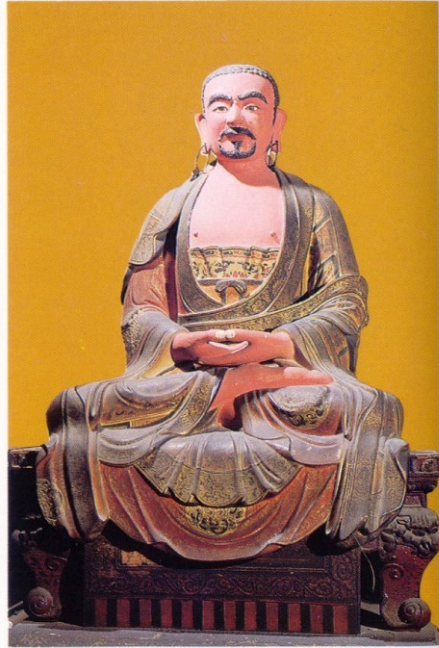
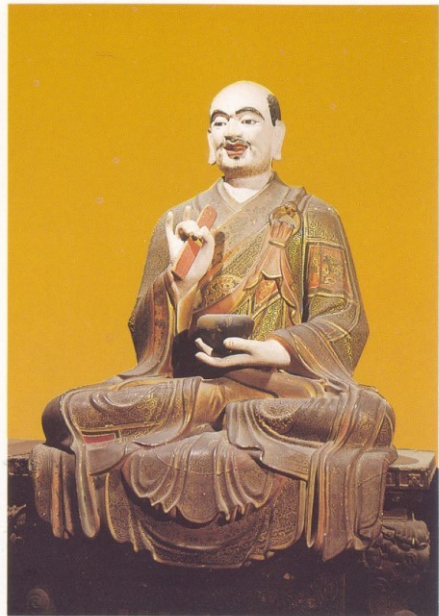


Figure 42: *Cūḍapanthaka*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 42.



阿氏多 Ajita

Figure 43: *Piṇḍolabharadvāja*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 45.

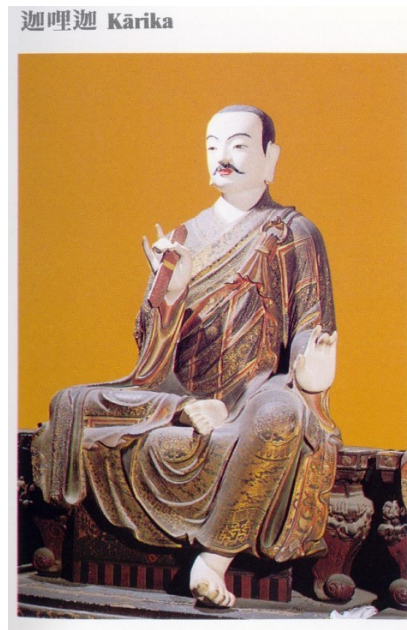


Figure 44: *Panthaka*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 43.



Figure 45: *Nāgasena*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 44.

伐闍羅弗多羅 Vajraputra

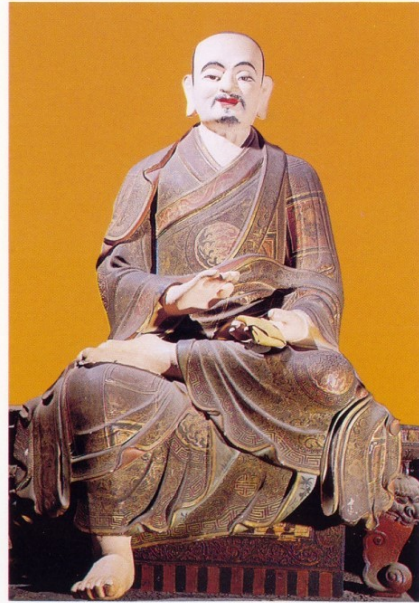


Figure 46: *Gopaka*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 43.

迦葉尊者 Mahakasyapa



Figure 47: *Abheda*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 44.

戌博迦 Supāka



Figure 48: *Upāsaka Hvashang*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 43.

軍屠鉢嘆尊者 Juntubotan



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Figure 51: *Buddhas of Longevity*. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 52.



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Figure 55: Hall of the Dharma Wheel (*Falundian* 法輪殿). Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 56: Interior of the Hall of the Dharma Wheel. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 58.



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Figure 59: Western Side Hall (*Xipeidian* 西配殿), looking west. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.

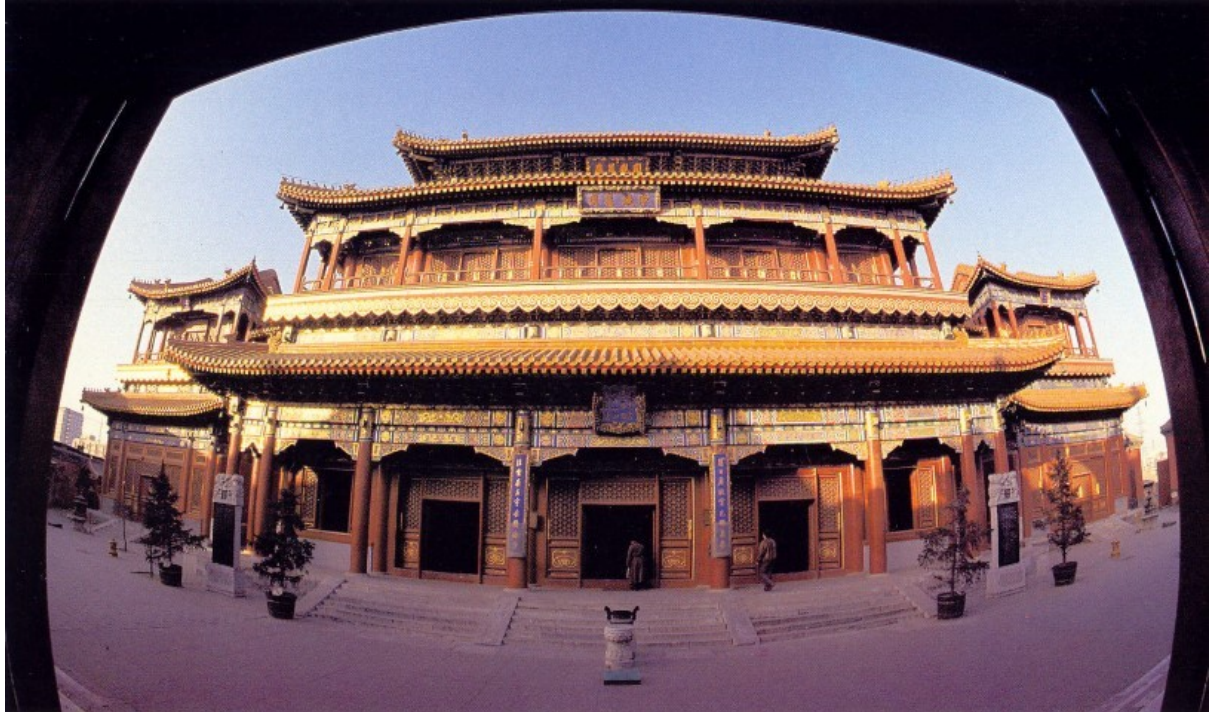


Figure 60: Pavilion of Infinite Happiness (*Wanfuge* 萬福閣). From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 78.



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Figure 64: Yamāntaka Tower (*Yamandagalou* 雅曼達嘎), looking west. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.

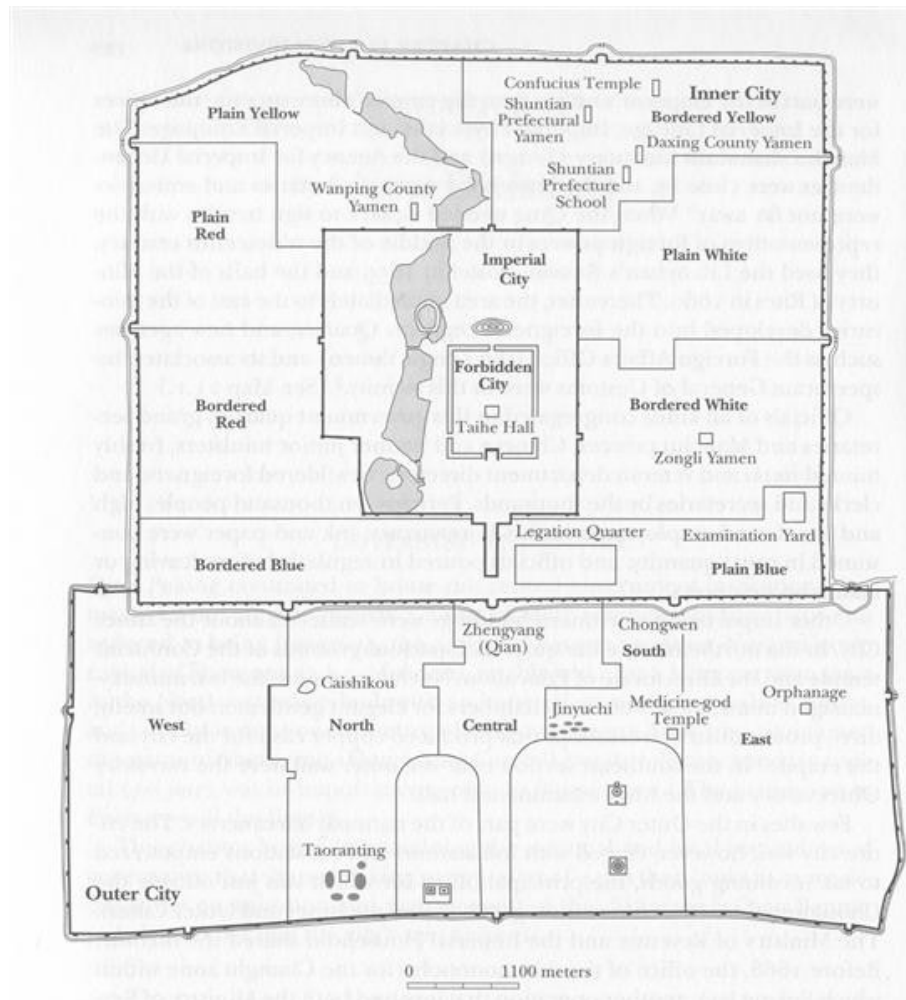


Figure 65: Qing Beijing. From Naquin, Susan. *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. Map 11.1, 356.



Figure 66: *Kālacakra Mandala*. From Brauen, Martin. *The Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston: Shambhala, 1997. Pl. 46. Painting from Musée Guimet collection (MA 3814).



Figure 67: *Śākyamuni Refuge Field*. H: 93.5, w: 63 cm. From Jia Yang 甲央, Wang Mingxing 王明星, and Dawaciren 达瓦次仁. *Bao Zang: Zhongguo Xizang Lishi Wenwu* 寶藏: 中国西藏历史文物 ("Precious Deposits: Historical Relics of Tibet, China"). Beijing: Zhaohua chubanshe, 2000. Vol. 4.



Figure 68: *The Qianlong Emperor as Mañjughoṣa-Ākravartin*. Thangka, ink, colors, and gold on silk. H: 113.6 W: 64.3 cm. From Bruckner, Christopher, ed. *Chinese Imperial Patronage: Treasures from Temples and Palaces*. London: Christopher Bruckner Asian Art Gallery, 1998. Cat. 1, 9. Freer/Sackler collection (F2000.4).



Figure 69: *Fish-Dragon Transformation Basin* (*Yu long bianhua pan* 魚龍變化盤). From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 71.



Figure 70: Painting of Yuanmingyuan site “Diligent Government and Deference to the Virtuous” (*Qinzheng Qinxian* 勤政親賢). From Chiu, Che Bing and Gilles B. Berthier. *Yuanming Yuan: Le Jardin De La Clarté Parfaite*. Besançon: Editions de l'Imprimeur, 2000. Scene I, no. 2.

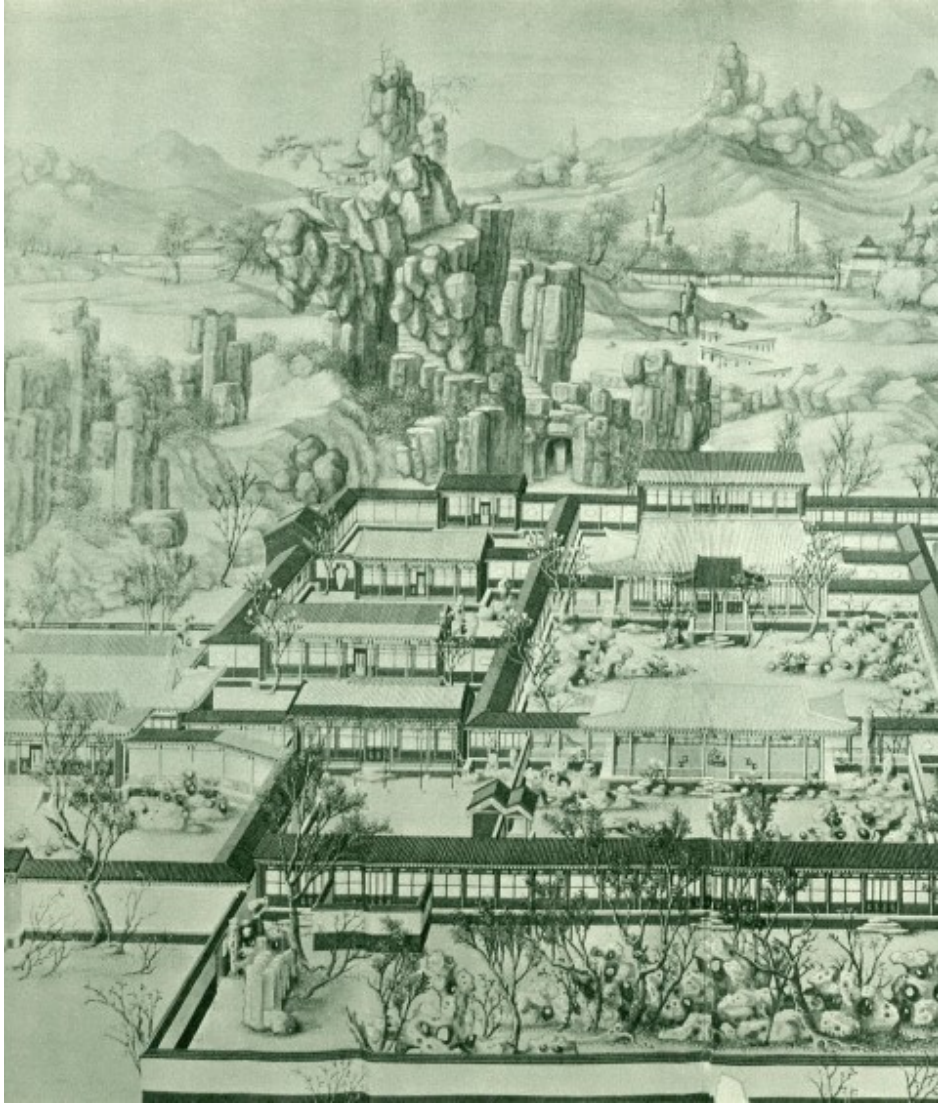


Figure 71: Painting of Yuanmingyuan site “Diligent Government and Deference to the Virtuous” (*Qinzheng Qinxian* 勤政親賢). From Sirén, Osvald. *The Imperial Palaces of Peking: Two Hundred and Seventy Four Plates in Collotype After the Photographs by the Author: Twelve Architectural Drawings and Two Maps with a Short Historical Account*. New York: AMS Press, 1976 [1926]. Pl. 177. (Only identified as “one of the imperial gardens” in caption.) Bibliothèque Nationale collection, Paris.



Figure 72: *Stele with Śākyamuni and Maitreya, back.* China, Six Dynasties period (317-581), Northern Qi dynasty (550-577). Marble with polychromy, h:119.00 cm. From Cunningham, Michael R. *Masterworks of Asian Art.* Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1998. 36.



Figure 73: *Rāhula*. By Ding Guanpeng (fl. 1737-68). Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper. From *Luohan Hua* 羅漢畫 (“Arhat Paintings”). Taipei Shi: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1990. Cat. 23. National Palace Museum collection.



Figure 74: Main entrance gate to Yonghegong, with West Pailou visible. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.

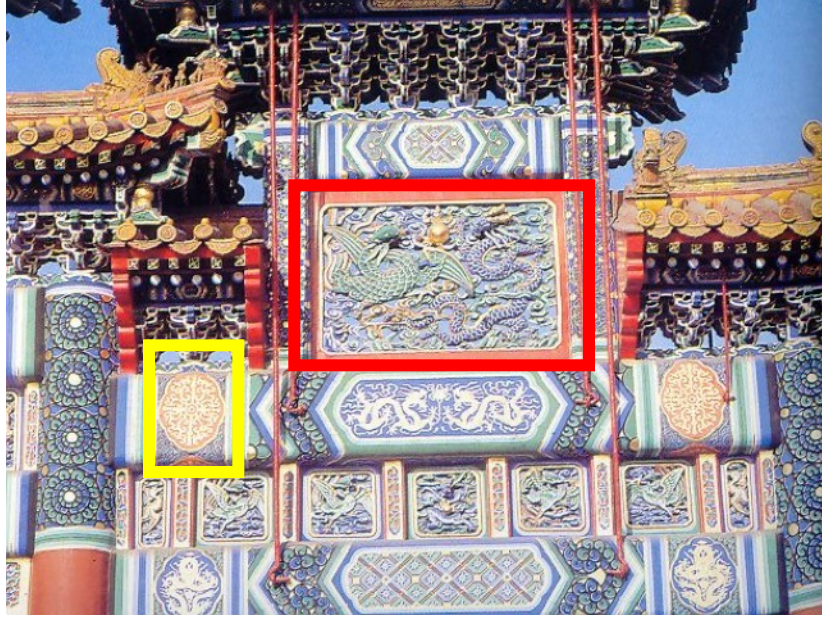


Figure 75: North Pailou, “The Dragon and Phoenix Harbinger Prosperity” (*longfeng chengxiang* 龍鳳呈祥) motif, outlined in red; viśvavajra motif outlined in yellow. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 12.



Figure 76: North Pailou, “Two Dragons Sporting with a Pearl” (*erlong xizhu* 二龍戲珠) motif, central panel, in sculpted and painted form. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 13.

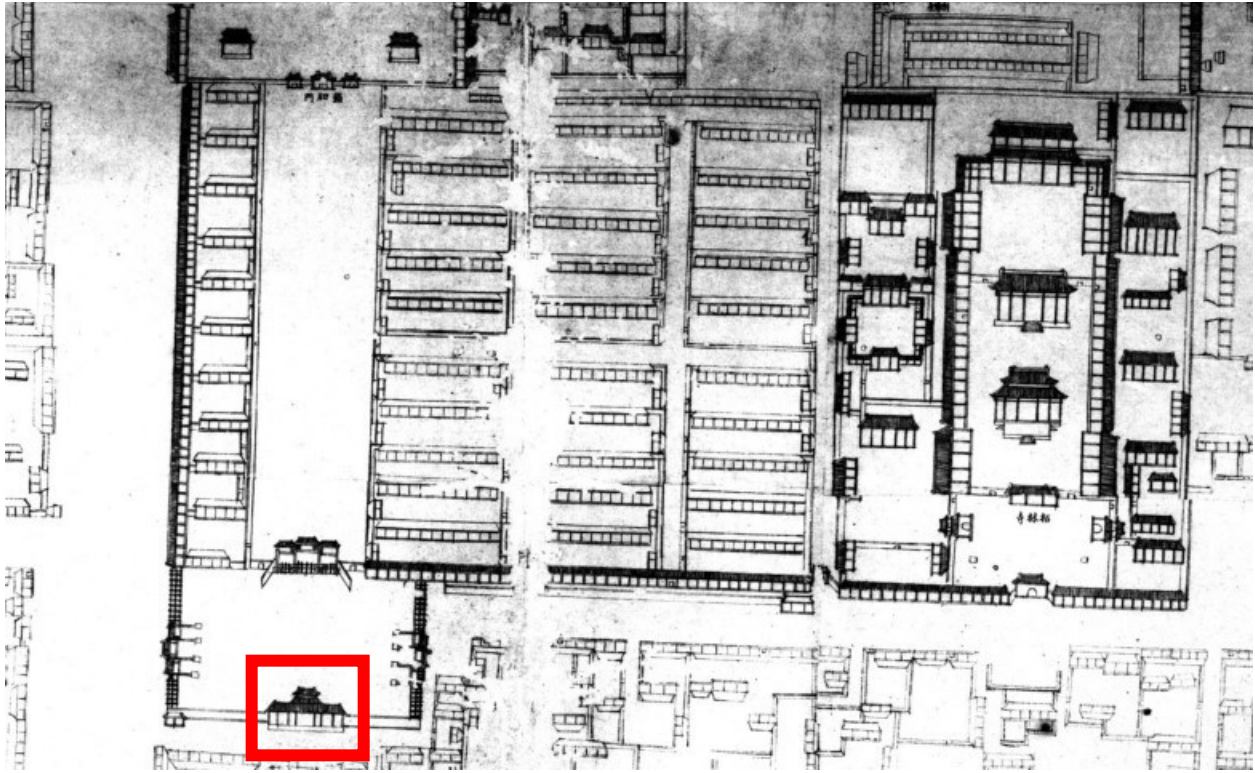


Figure 77: Detail of “Qianlong Period Complete Map of the Capital” (*Qianlong jingcheng quantu* 乾隆京城全圖), 1750, with Great Stage Tower outlined in red. The National Institute of Informatics Digital Silk Road Project Digital Archive of Toyo Bunko Rare Books. < <http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/II-11-D-802/>>. Accessed January, 2011.

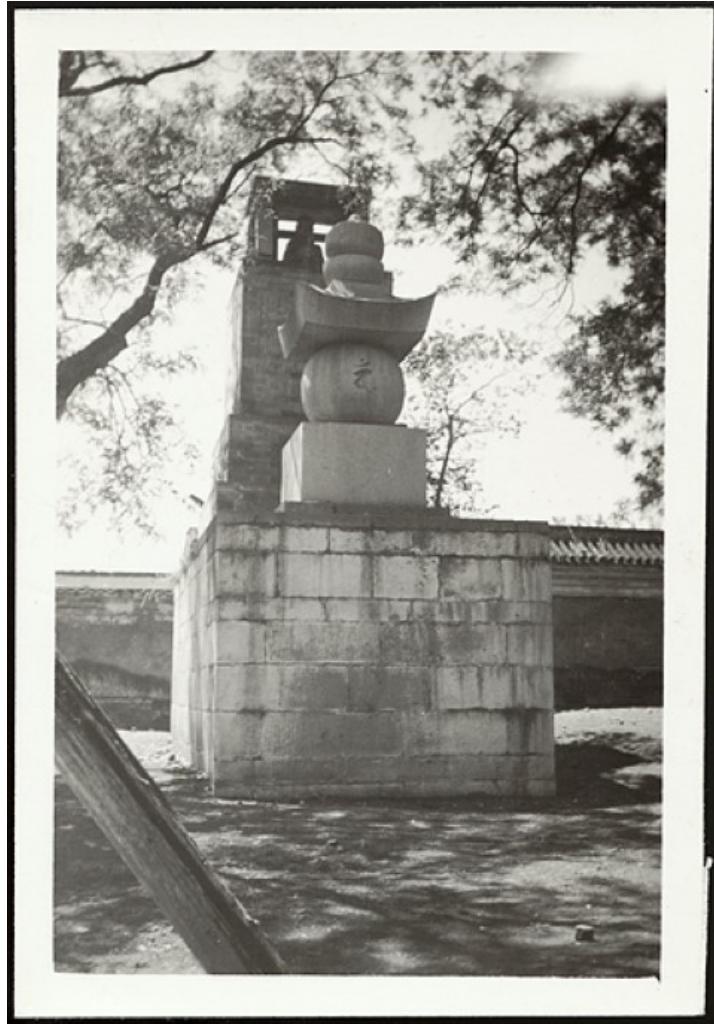


Figure 78: Spirit-summoning Pavilion (*Zhaohunting* 招魂亭), ca. 1923-24. Langdon Warner collection. Harvard Fine Arts Library, Special Collections. VSC0001.0932. Record Identifier: olvwork123540.

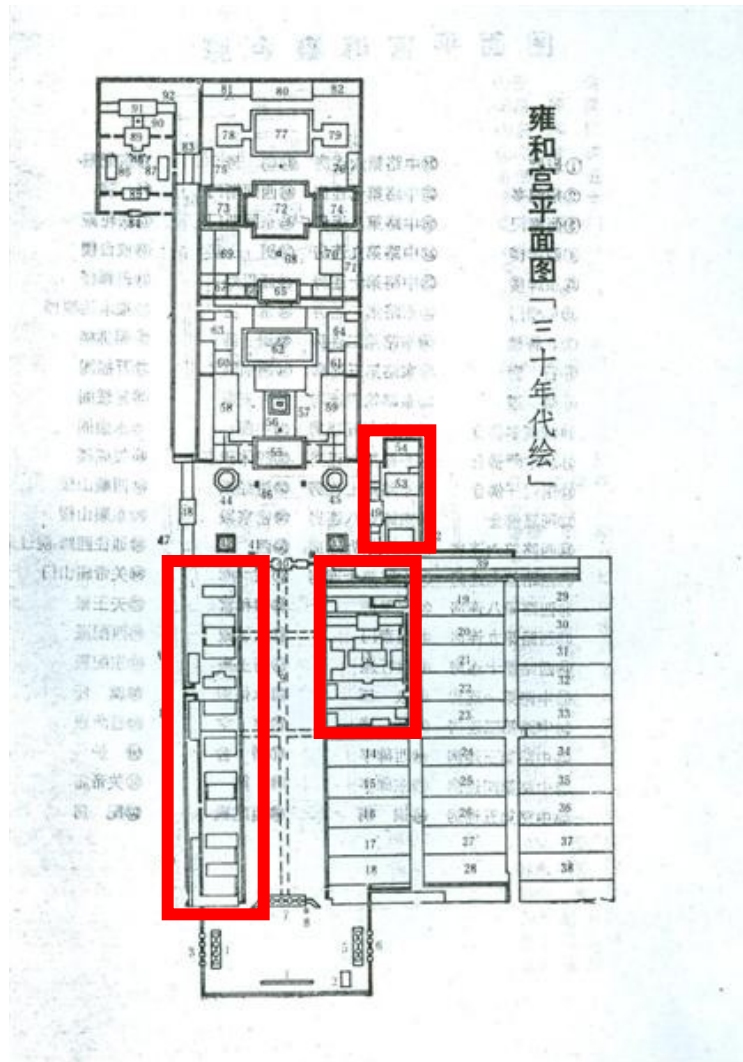


Figure 79: Yonghegong in the 1930s, with khutukhtu residences outlined in red. From Wei Kaizhao 魏开肇. *Yonghegong manlu* 雍和宫漫录 (“An informal record of Yonghegong”). [Zhengzhou shi] : Henan ren min chubanshe and Henan sheng xinhua shudian faxing, 1985. N.p.

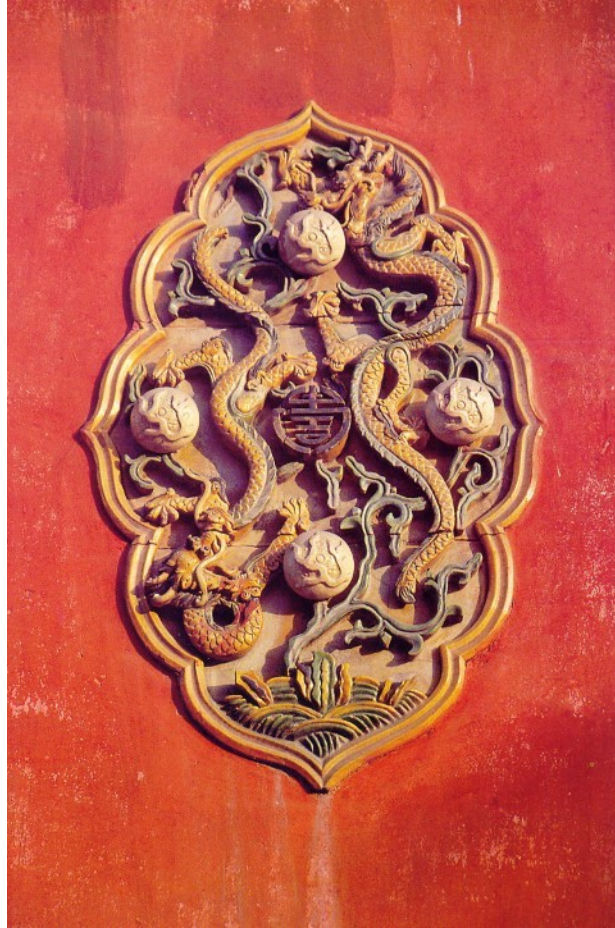


Figure 80: Gate of Luminous Peace, “Two Dragons Sporting with a Pearl” (*erlong xizhu* 二龍戲珠) motif with “longevity” (*shou* 壽). From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 15.



Figure 81: Gate of Luminous Peace, name plaque. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 82: Drum Tower façade, with Tibetan three syllable dharani or mantra outlined in red, viśvavajra motif outlined in yellow, and “two dragons sporting with a pearl motif” on column-top tie above door. Author’s photo. July 28, 2005.



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Figure 85: East Octagonal Pavilion, front of *baxia* 霸下 sculpture at base of stele. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 86: East Octagonal Pavilion, rear of *baxia* 霸下 sculpture at base of stele. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 87: East Octagonal Pavilion, dragon relief sculpture at top of stele. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 88: East Octagonal Pavilion, dragon relief sculpture at top of stele. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



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Figure 90: “Walking beasts” eaves decoration on Bell tower, looking south. Detail of Fig. 17. Author’s photo. July 28, 2005.

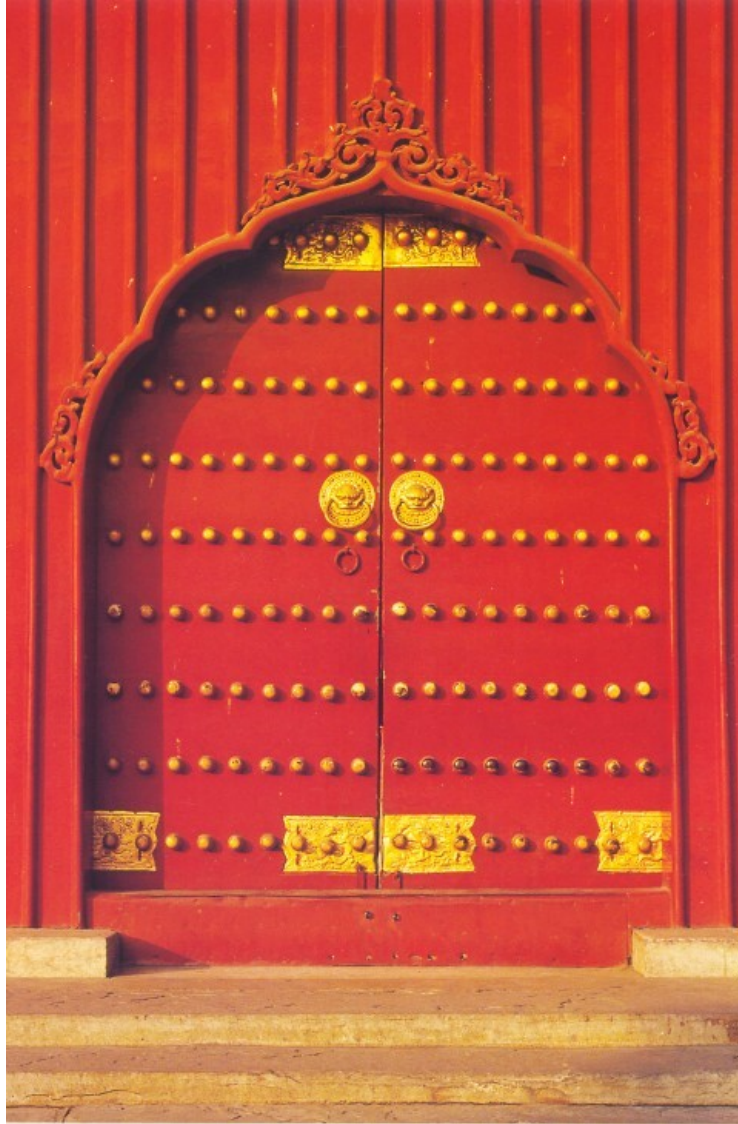


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Figure 92: Male bronze lion in front of Gate of Harmony and Peace. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 93: Female bronze lion in front of Gate of Harmony and Peace. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



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Figure 95: Name plaque, Gate of Harmony and Peace. Photo by David Baron. September 15, 2007. < <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dbaron/1394622838/>>.



Figure 96: Incense burner. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 35.



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Figure 98: Shrine to Phra Phrom, in front of Hall of Eternal Protection. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 50.



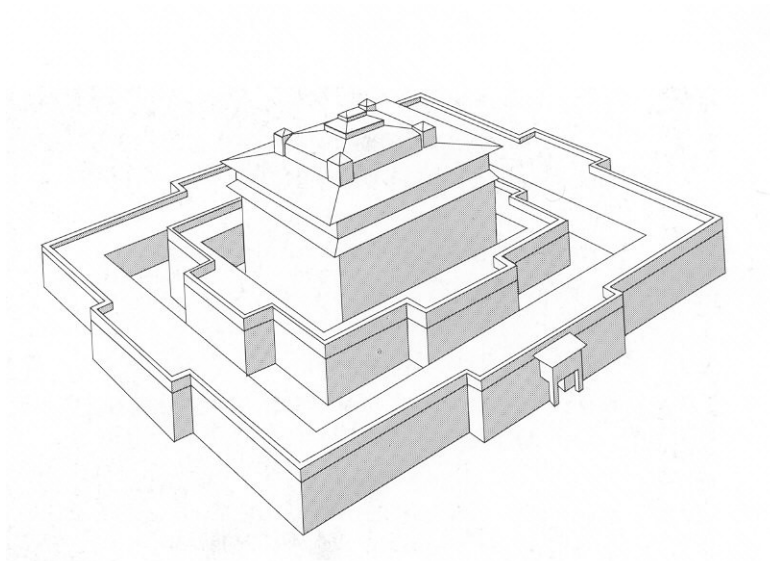
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Figure 100: Hall of the Dharma Wheel, front portico section. Author's photo. July 28, 2005.



Figure 101: Main hall at Samye Monastery, Dranang, Shanan Prefecture, TAR, China. Photo by Nathan Freitas. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:A_grand_view_of_Samye.jpg>.



26 Reconstruction of the main temple of Samye in its original form.

Figure 102: Reconstruction of the Main hall of Samye. From Brauen, Martin. *The Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston: Shambhala, 1997. 31.



Figure 103: Interior of Ordination Platform Tower. Photo by Ray Yu. October 17, 2008. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/rayyu/3029918404/>.



Figure 104: Avalokiteśvara Pavilion (*Guanying* 觀音閣), Dule Monastery 獨樂寺, Hebei province. 984. From Steinhardt, Nancy S., ed. *Chinese Architecture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. 167, Fig. 5-30.

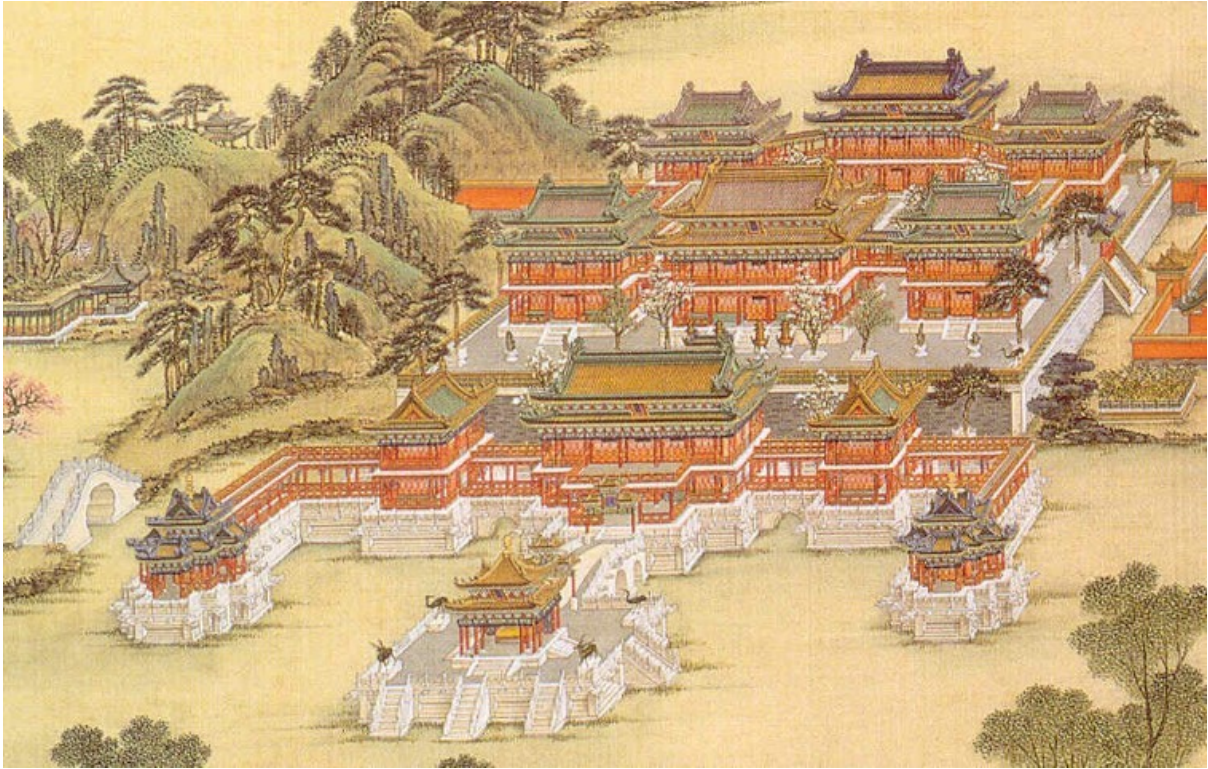


Figure 105: Detail of painting of Yuanmingyuan site “Fanghu Wonderland” (*Fanghu shengjing* 方壺勝景). From Chiu, Che Bing and Gilles B. Berthier. *Yuanming Yuan: Le Jardin De La Clarté Parfaite*. Besançon: Editions de l'Imprimeur, 2000. Scene II, no. 9.

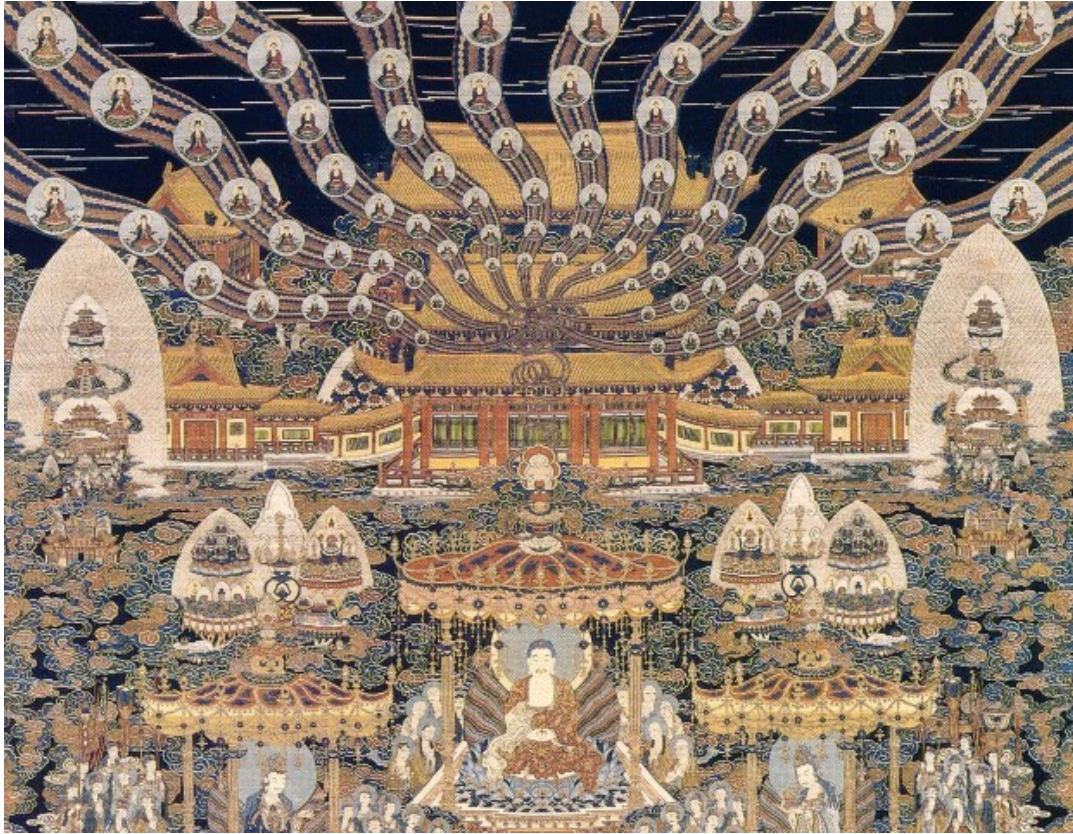


Figure 106: Detail of silk weaving depicting the Pure Land of the Western Paradise. Qianlong period. Poychrome satin tapestry. 448 x 196.5 cm. From Zhu, Jiaqian, and Graham Hutt. *Treasures of the Forbidden City*. Middlesex, Eng: Viking, 1986. Cat. 97, 245.



Figure 107: *Yonghegong Phagpa Lokeśvara*. From Jia Yang 甲央, Wang Mingxing 王明星, and Dawaciren 达瓦次仁. *Bao Zang: Zhongguo Xizang Lishi Wenwu* 寶藏：中国西藏历史文物 (“Precious Deposits: Historical Relics of Tibet, China”). Beijing: Zhaohua chubanshe, 2000. Cat 13, 32.



Figure 108: *Yuhuage Phagpa Lokeśvara*. From Palace Museum, ed. *Qinggong Zangchuan fojiao wenwu* 清宮藏傳佛教文物 (“Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism in the Qing Palace”). Beijing: Gugong bowuyuan zijincheng chubanshe, 1992. Cat. 131, 251.



Figure 109: Hvashang and disciples, from New Year's cham dance at Yonghegong. From Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 229.

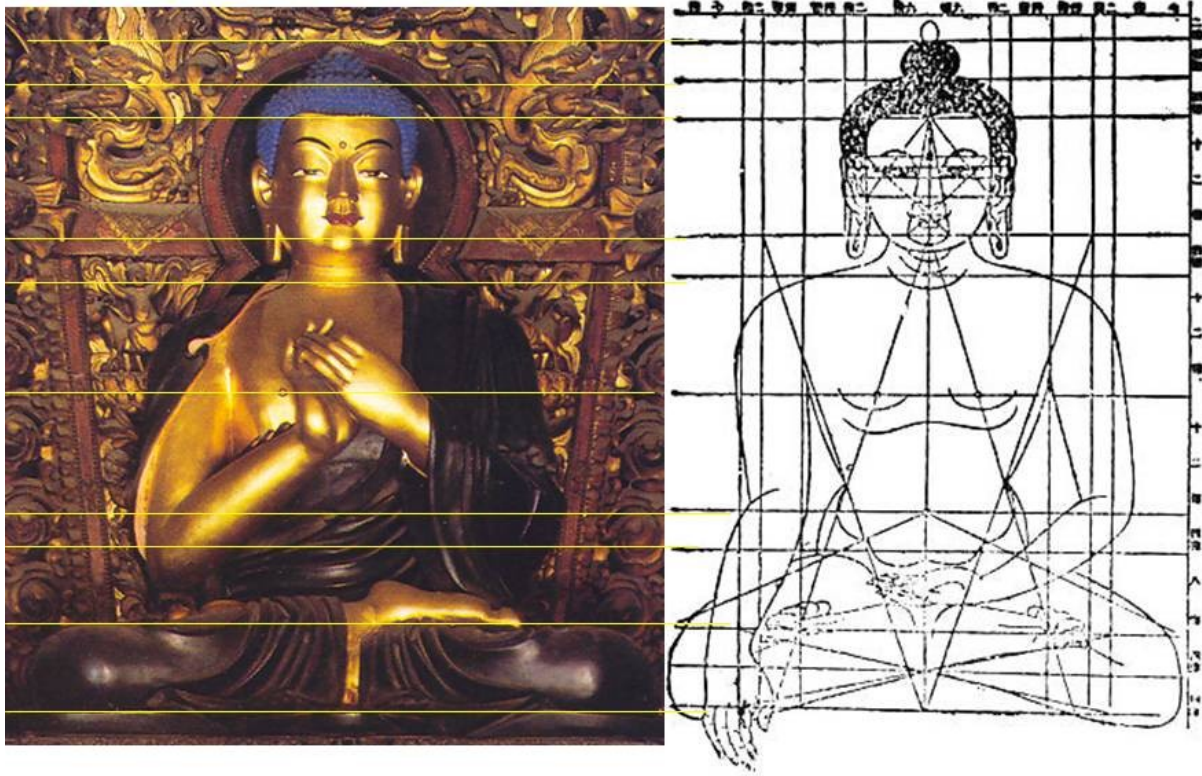


Figure 110: Comparison of *Maitreya Buddha* at Yonghegong to iconometric image from Canon of Iconometry. Maitreya Buddha from Du Jianye. *Palace of Harmony*. Xianggang: Yazhou yishu chubanshe, 1994. 41. Iconometric image from *Zaoxiang liangdu jing* 造像量度經 (“Canon of Iconometry”). T. v. 21, no. 1419, 936a-956b, SAT Daizōkyō Text Database. <http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index_en.html>. Accessed November, 2009.



Figure 111: Model image of Śākyamuni Buddha. From *Zaoxiang liangdu jing* 造像量度經 (“Canon of Iconometry”). T. v. 21, no. 1419, 936a-956b, SAT Daizōkyō Text Database. <http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index_en.html>. Accessed November, 2009.



Figure 112: *Polhanas Śākyamuni Buddha*. Early Qing (?). Statue: gilded copper; 40 cm. Throne: bronze, 22 cm. Back-support, 110 cm. Sumeru-throne platform: wood, 24 cm. From Wang Shu, ed. *Lamasery of Harmony and Peace*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2002



Figure 113: Interior of Hall of the Dharma Wheel, early twentieth century. Uncredited photo. Alex Wayman and Ferdinand Lessing Collection. Naritasan Buddhist Library 成田山仏教図書館, Naritasan Shinshōji Temple 成田山新勝寺, Narita, Japan.

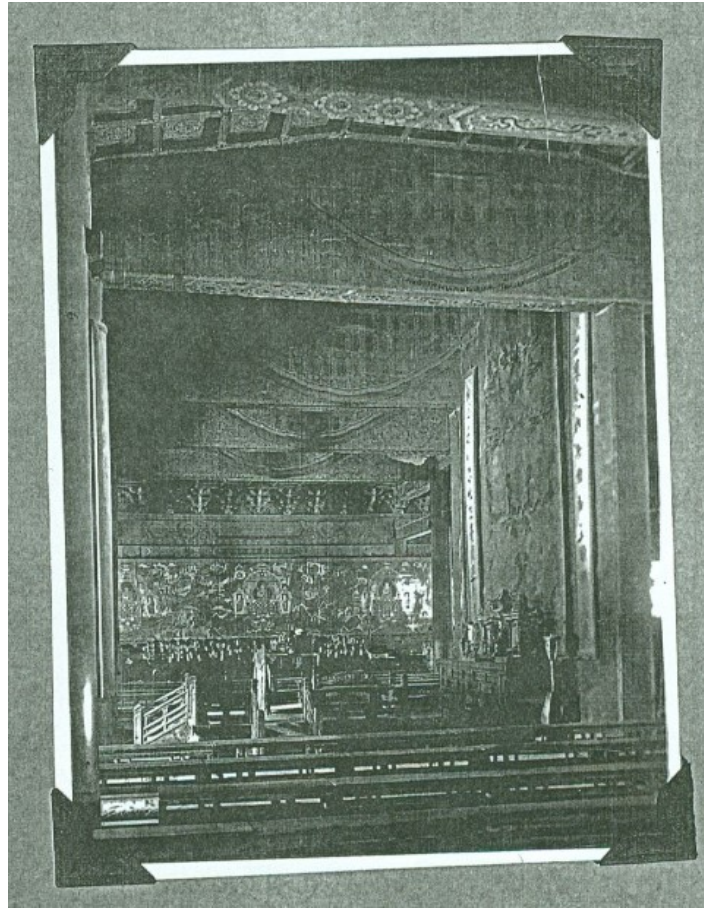


Figure 114: Interior of Hall of the Dharma Wheel, early twentieth century. Uncredited photo. Alex Wayman and Ferdinand Lessing Collection. Naritasan Buddhist Library 成田山仏教図書館, Naritasan Shinshōji Temple 成田山新勝寺, Narita, Japan.



Figure 115: Interior of the Hall of Ten-thousand Dharmas Returning as One (*Wanfaguiyidian* 萬法歸一殿). From Shi Liwu 师力武, ed. *Bishushanzhuang yu waibamiao* 避暑山庄与外八庙 (“The Mountain Villa for Escaping the Summer Heat, and the Eight Outer Temples”). Beijing: Zhongguo lüyou chubanshe, 2001. 71.